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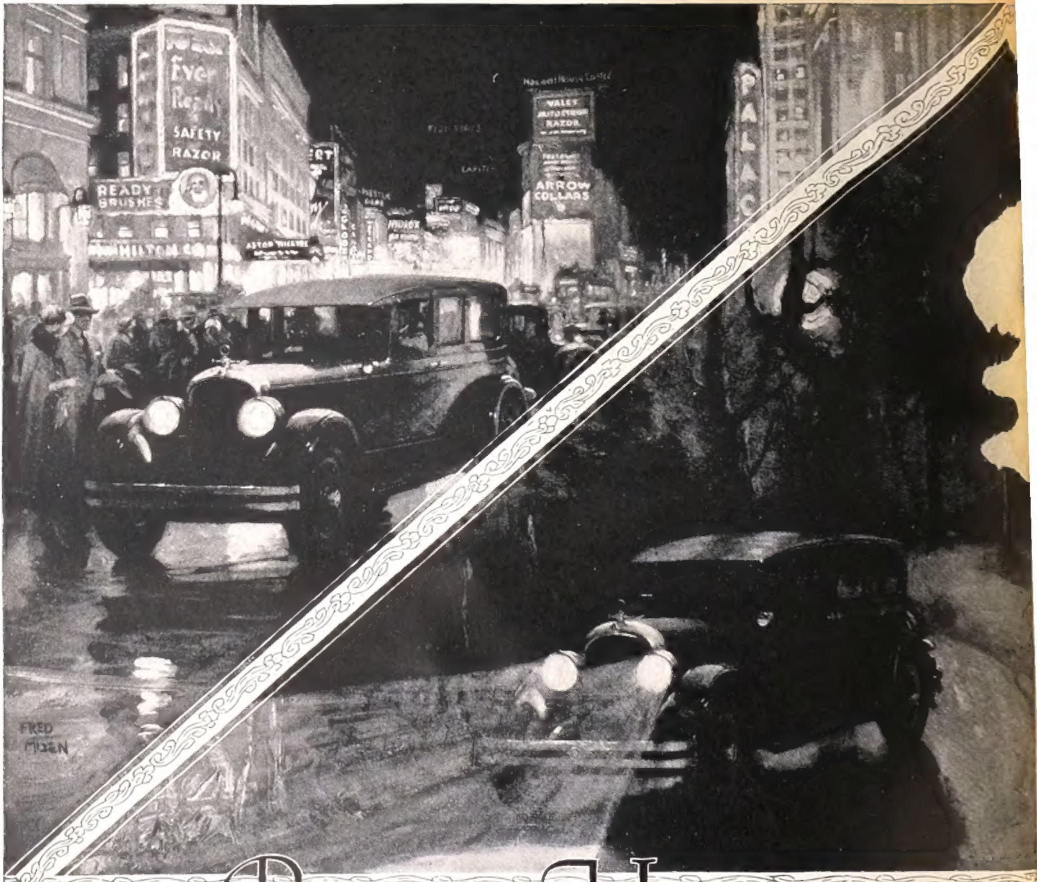
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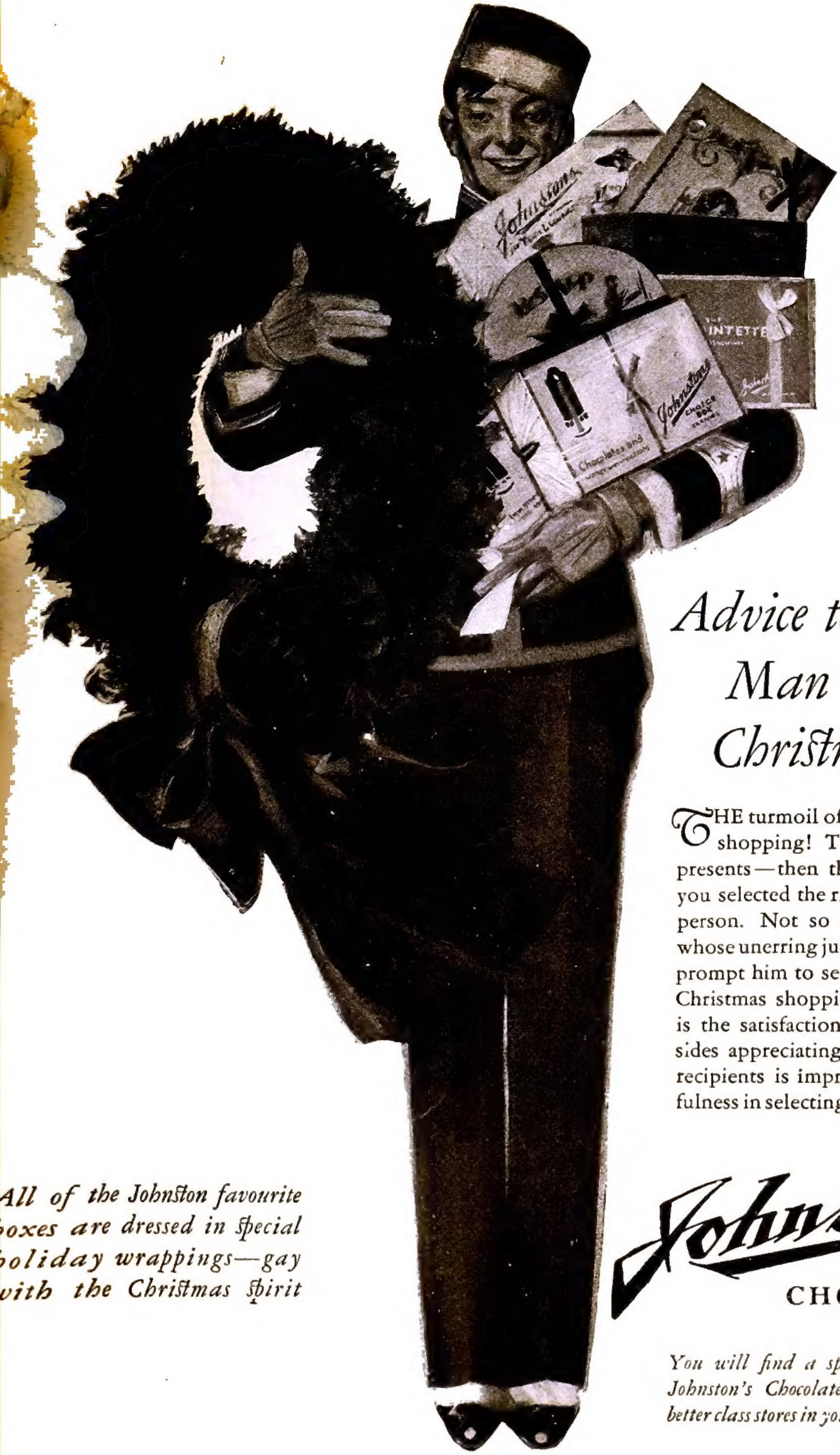

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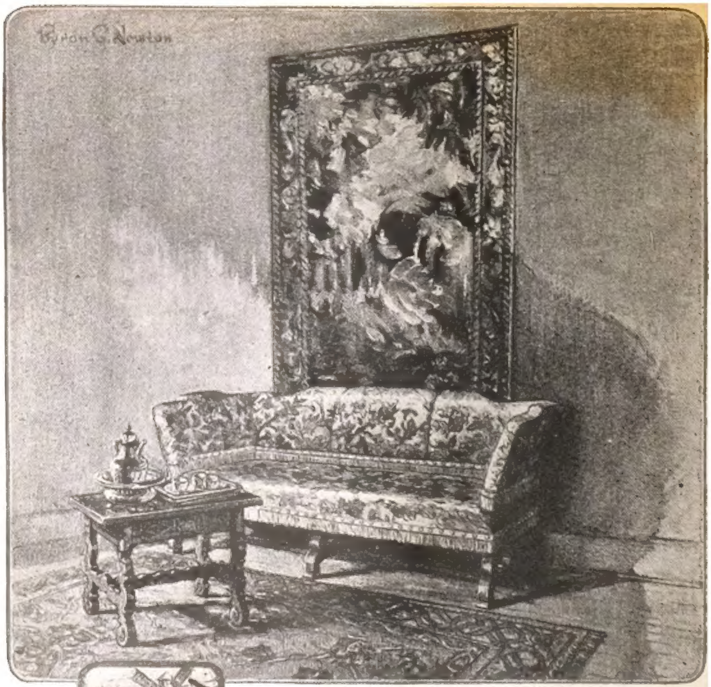

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Number 12

DECEMBER
1925

THE GOLDEN BOOK* MAGAZINE

OF FICTION AND TRUE STORIES THAT WILL LIVE

Edited by HENRY WYSHAM LANIER

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Some Persons of Importance

I observed again with increased gravity, "People do not give away enough," and I proceeded to explain:

"They are not sufficiently liberal in almsgiving. They are wrong: for every one should give to the poor what he does not want for himself."

"It's possible," replied Fontanet, after reflecting a moment or two.

This utterance, brief as it was, encouraged me, and I proposed to my beloved condisciple that we two together should form a charitable association. I knew his enterprising character, his quick, inventive brain, and I was confident that, between us, we should do big things. . . .

"How much money have you to give to the poor?" asked Fontanet.

I replied that I had two quarters and a cent to give to the fund, and that if Fontanet would contribute a like sum we could put our charitable work into operation at once.

Now it befell that Fontanet, who was the only son of a very rich widow, and had a pony already saddled given him for a New Year's present, could, for the moment, produce no more than eight cents. But, as he justly pointed out, it was not necessary that we should both pay in the same amount at the outset. He would give more later on.

ANATOLE FRANCE: *The Bloom of Life.*

ANATOLE FRANCE'S charming little tale of "Mademoiselle de Doucine"—which has the same irresistible appeal that touched the heart in Boutet de Monvel's drawings—illustrates one point brought out in our collection of quotations on "Christmas." The Christmas-present idea, which threatens in America to engulf every other significance of the day, is peculiar to lands which have drawn their festivities from Teutonic sources.

But this observance apparently came from a most ancient custom of making gifts on New Year's day, still observed in the French *jour d'étrennes.*

Roman tradition asserted that Tatius, King of the Sabines (747 B.C.) used to receive from his subjects *Strenae*, branches cut from the wood sacred to *Strenia*, goddess of strength. Among the Romans themselves, offerings to Salus of branches of bay and palm, sweetmeats of honey, figs and dates, were of good omen for the coming year. And the custom of presenting gifts to the Cæsar became so universal that the populace went en masse to deliver them, and to wish him happiness.

The Druids, too, cut sprays of sacred plants and distributed them. On the feast of Lights, Hannukah, Hebrews give money and presents to the children. In Russia the gift-day is Epiphany Eve, Twelfth Night, and the Italian "Befana" (commemorating the old woman who would not leave her housework to view the Three Kings, saying she could see them on her return) corresponds thus far to our Santa Claus.

Doubtless all these sprang from immemorial observances, due to deep instincts of the human mind and heart.

* * *

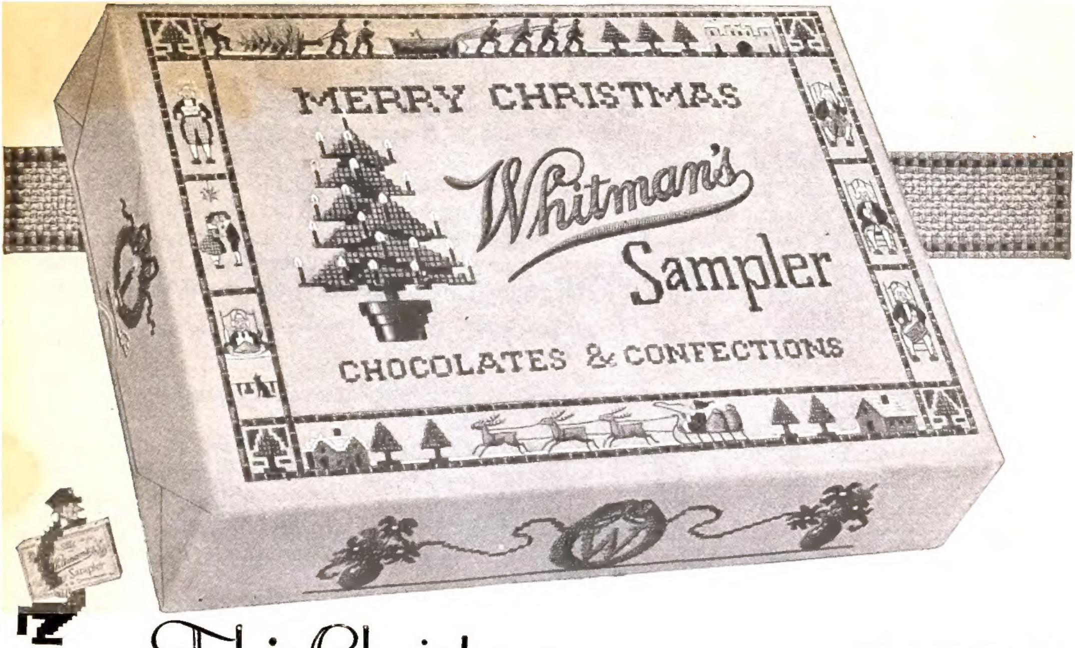
Some years ago a contest was held by publishers who have distributed some millions of volumes by O. Henry, readers being invited to vote to select the most popular story out of the two hundred and sixty-eight in the twelve-volume set. Ten times as many votes were received for "The Gift of the Magi" as for any other tale.

It's one of the simplest and shortest of Porter's stories; it appeared originally in 1905 in the New York *World*, as one of a most unpretentious daily newspaper series; but it had some quality of human appeal which has given it exceptional vitality. In point of fact, while the plot is obviously "constructed," while the whole thing is merely an incidental anecdote, it seems to suggest a whole philosophy of life.

* * *

Vladimir Galaktionovich Korolenko was sixty-eight when he died on Christmas

(*Continued on page 6*)



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Study the beauties of the Cloisonné Package, a metal box of real cloisonné design compact with selected chocolates. Admire the art study by Franklin Booth on the new package of Bonnybrook Milk Chocolates, a new Whitman assortment. Observe the bright bands on the Standard and other packages—a little touch of Christmas cheer.

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The Whitman agency near you gets every package *direct from Whitman's not through a jobber.* Write for booklet "On Choosing Chocolates" and folder illustrating the beautiful Whitman fancy boxes and baskets for Christmas gift giving.

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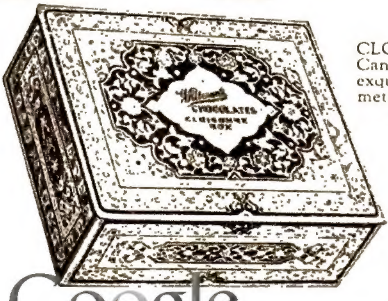

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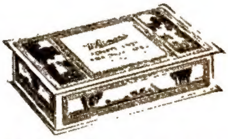

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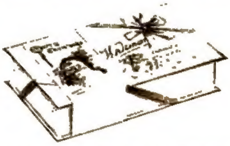

STANDARD CHOCOLATES—Famous since 1842. With special "Merry Christmas" band

(*Continued from page 4*)

day of 1921. Like so many Russian authors, he knew from bitter experience the full meaning of cold and hunger, of privation of mind as well as body. While still a student he was sent to Kronstadt as one holding revolutionary ideas; and in 1879 he was exiled to Tomsk. A protest merely resulted in his transfer to the desolation of the tundra country of eastern Siberia, near Yakutsk.

Here, in a squalid hut, "like an island lost in a boundless ocean," amid half-savage and hopeless folk, he spent about fifteen years, writing some of his strongest stories (beginning with "Makar's Dream") from first-hand observation.

His high position in his native land was shown in 1903 when his fiftieth birthday was celebrated all over Russia; and his searching grasp of nature and human nature is shown in every line of "Winter."

* * *

Balzac's mind was evidently full of the exciting political events convulsing France when he wrote "The Church: Jesus Christ in Flanders."

The revolution of July, 1830, had just overthrown the elder Bourbon monarchy, which had ruled France by divine right since the 9th Century (with an interlude brought about by one Napoleon Bonaparte). Charles X had abdicated and fled to England. Doubtless many a Frenchman felt that the very foundation was rocking; and Balzac, in his final paragraph, makes it clear that his retelling of the old legend was in defense of religion, what we would call nowadays propaganda:

> "Belief," I said to myself "is Life! I have just witnessed the funeral of a monarchy, now we must defend the Church."

All of which merely goes to show that it makes little difference what starts a great man's pen. If William Jennings Bryan had been a Balzac—but I will not ask too much of a reader's imagination.

Anyhow, this seems one of the great short stories. And there are few enough modern ones, dealing with Jesus of Nazareth, on which the kindest comment would not be that they were hardly necessary.

* * *

Finley Peter Dunne was a newspaper reporter in Chicago for seven years, having begun at the age of eighteen; then for another eight years he was busy in editorial work, editing the *Journal* from 1897 to 1900.

It was just about the time he took charge of this paper that his shrewd Mr. Dooley began to delight American readers; and it was not until this entertaining gentleman's observations had run to seven volumes that he retired again to private life in the Ar-rchey Road. His comments were so close to current happenings that one might expect a re-reading of them to have a flatness as of last week's newspaper; but there is such magnificent commonsense back of the humour that many of these dissertations to his friend Mr. Hennessy are as fresh as ever.

In fact, I believe Mr. Dooley might serve admirably for many of us the same purpose for which Thomas W. Lawson kept in his office a three-foot Japanese bronze elephant, of a wisdom and dignity that were profoundly impressive.

I asked him why he had this big fellow (and probably fifty smaller ones) in such an incongruous place.

"Just look at him," replied Lawson. "A man couldn't look at himself in the mirror or twist his moustache with that in the room."

Possibly, if Mr. Dooley could pervade these United States more thoroughly, we might, for instance, find ourselves beginning to stammer and blush when we start to proclaim that we are the biggest this, and that, and the other.

* * *

Charles Rann Kennedy was born in England, and served a long apprenticeship (as lecturer, actor, press-agent, theatrical business manager and writer of stories, articles and poems) before devoting himself to dramatic writing. It was the deep impression made

(*Continued on page 8*)

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(Continued from page 6)

by "The Servant in the House" which established him here as a dramatist; and though this was produced in 1908, it is still alive on the stage.

For years now Mr. Kennedy and his wife (who, as Edith Wynne Matthison, made a distinguished success in many rôles, from Shakespeare and "Everyman" and Greek dramas to "The Blue Bird") have had charge of the dramatic work at the Bennett School, and in addition they have produced publicly several of Mr. Kennedy's plays—"The Army with Banners," "The Fool from the Hills," "The Chastening," and "The Admiral."

* * *

Luigi Capuana has been a distinguished figure in modern Italian literature for sixty years. Born in Sicily in 1839, he began to write dramatic criticisms while our Civil War was raging; and when he was forty he brought out a novel, "Giacenta," which classed him beside his compatriot Verga as an exponent of the new school of realistic fiction.

But his work shows a very wide range, as is evident from the contrast between the moral purpose of "Dr. Cymbalus" and the clever lightness of "A Kiss" in the February issue. He has made experiments in rhythmical prose in his "Semi-Rhythms," produced two volumes of delightful fairy tales, a book of "Profiles of Women," full of delicate understanding and character etching; and other stories which pulse with red blood and human drama.

* * *

Feodor Mikhailovitch Dostoievsky (1821–1881) was a Titan, but, like Prometheus, he seemed to be in the clutch of vultures, and his tortured struggles almost convulse the reader's universe. "Crime and Punishment," "The Idiot" and "The Brothers Karamazov" are far from cheerful reading—huge, raw slices of human life in its criminal, diseased, tragic manifestations. Only the author's prodigious power, and his deep sympathy for his fellows in misfortune prevent one from turning away in disgust.

It is all, however, so clearly a portion of the truth, that any one who has learned that truth is the most interesting thing in the world, provided one sees deep enough [illegible] widely enough, may perhaps find in it a most desirable balance for some of the machi[illegible] made and Pollyanna fiction so easy to write, read—and forget.

Certainly one doesn't forget his "Beggar Boy." He declares he "invented" the lit[illegible] incident: but it is all too clear that he had seen, and felt for, just such an outcast in [illegible] clutch of the cruel, inexorable City which is the pride of our modern civilization.

* * *

It's a pleasure to see how many of our readers know their Tennyson better [illegible] does the unworthy editor who failed to notice as a red flag of warning a slight [illegible] of surprise in his mind at the name signed to a quotation in the October issue (on[illegible] group gathered by a distinguished Greek professor, equally at home in Latin, [illegible] German, Italian and English literature!)

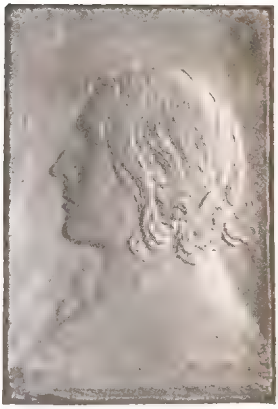
Information has poured in from a dozen sections of the United States and Ca[illegible] As, for example, from Baltimore:

> DEAR SIR:
>
> Forty five years ago, when Tennyson was and good roads were not, bright young girls walking in the country in Spring would quote Locksley Hall.
>
> When one of them (now an M.D.) exclaimed,
>
> "O mud! O mire!, once it drew
> From my poor foot its sole gum shoe,
> Alas! as sunlight drinketh dew."
>
> everybody knew she was parodying "Fatima."
>
> Tennyson is now so under a cloud that it is possible to attribute "O love! O fire" to Thoma[illegible] Southerne, as I saw in your October issue.
>
> In spite of modern criticism Tennyson thrills me yet as only Shakespeare and a very few others can.
>
> Yours very truly,
> GEORGE WORTHINGTON.

I had not read "Fatima" for something like forty years; but some slight evidence of my agreement with Mr. Worthington and other correspondents on the general matter

(Continued on page 10)

"He never made a commonplace remark in his life"



SO SAID a famous writer of Oscar Wilde. His words were like jewels. His brilliant conversation was the sensation of Britain's most distinguished dinner tables; his sparkling epigrams were on everyone's tongue; his piercing wit, his daring philosophy, his incredible versatility made him the literary sensation of his day.

What an amazing figure he was! The most striking personality of his time—perhaps the most dramatic character in literature. Think of a writer who could at once convulse smart society with his sophisticated plays and delight the hearts of children with some of the most beautiful fairy tales ever written—who could write fiction of enthralling interest, poetry of unforgettable beauty, essays of penetrating insight!

Today there is an ever-growing demand for Wilde's works. More and more people are discovering with boundless delight the charm and brilliancy of his art. In recognition of this widespread interest a remarkable new edition of his works has just been published—

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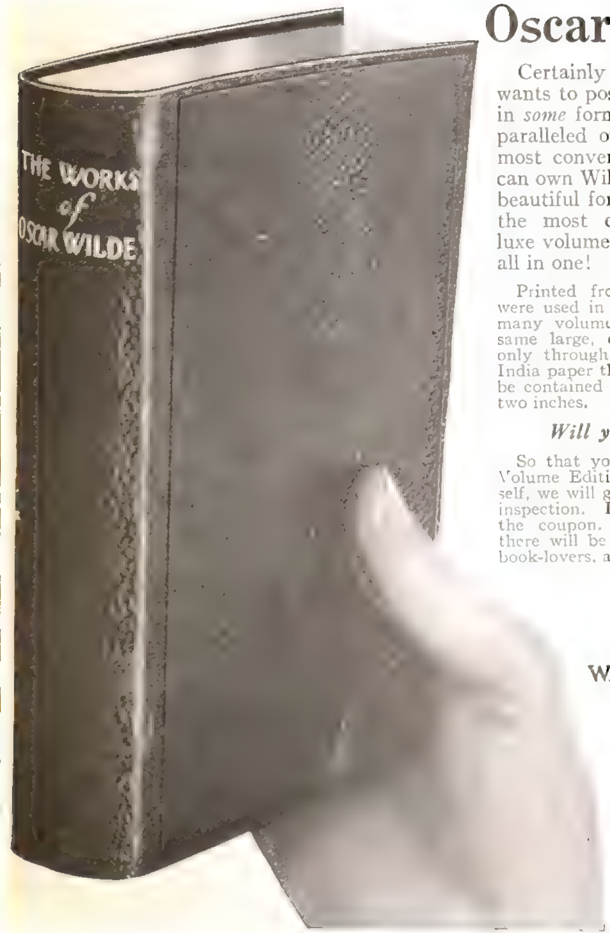

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(*Continued from page 8*)

of Tennyson is offered by the five entries I find under his name in the index to Volume I of the Golden Book—including three pages devoted to the Ballad of the *Revenge*. And there will surely be others.

* * *

To make one job of confession of errors, both of commission and omission:

Mr. Herman Bernstein should have received credit as translator of the Turgeniev story, "The Rendezvous," in the November number.

Also the Lepère woodcut, "The Halt," in "The Open Road" was from Mr. Alfred Fowler's interesting publication, *The Woodcut Annual.*

* * *

Does any reader happen to remember a story vehemently called for by a correspondent who is himself the president of a publishing house? It was called "Unknown Ports," by John Fleming Wilson (who died in 1922), and, oddly enough, we have not found it in the magazine where Mr. Beasley feels sure he saw it:

> "I think it is, without exception, one of the best stories I have ever read. It is about a Sea Captain on a Merchant Marine vessel, whose boyish desires to be a pirate increased rather than diminished with the passing of the years. Finally, when he retired, with a comfortable sum of money, and being a bachelor, he decided to buy a small sailing vessel—fitted it out as a privateer, "manned" it with the wickedest crew he could find, and set out on a pirating expedition. Shortly after his start they ran into a real Chinese pirate and a battle ensued in which the old Captain received mortal injuries. When the survivors of his crew attempted to sympathize with him, he waved them aside and assured them that he had the greatest time of his life, and that he was dying happy."

Information as to where and when it appeared will be appreciated. H. W. L.

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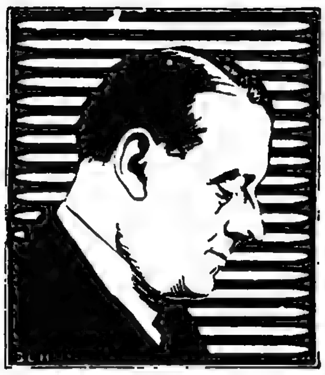

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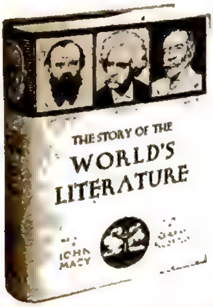

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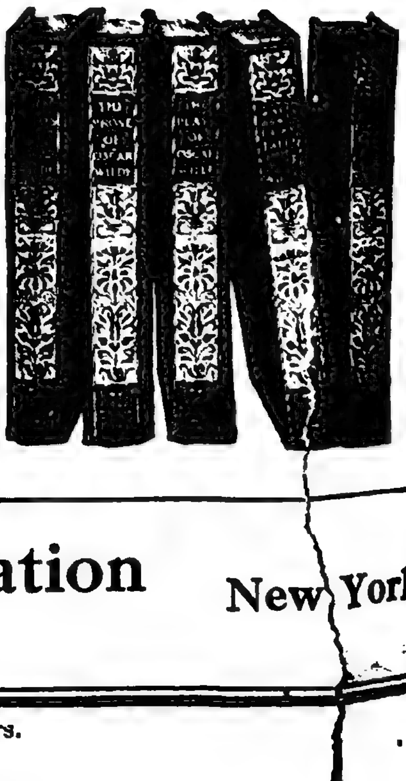

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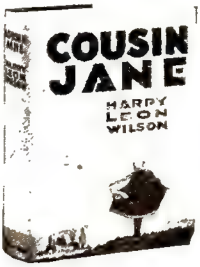

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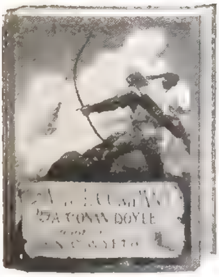

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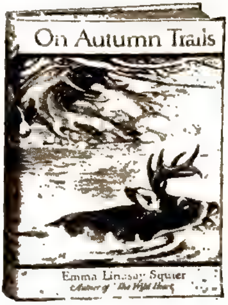

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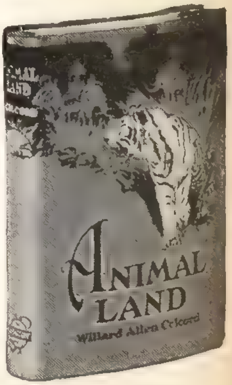

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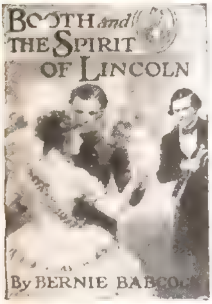

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A department offering its services without charge to readers of THE GOLDEN BOOK. All letters to the Bureau are treated as personal and confidential and are answered in full by mail. Below appear a few extracts from recent correspondence relating to subjects of general interest. Address Investment Bureau, THE GOLDEN BOOK, 55 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

THE FINANCIAL DIRECTORY

THE GOLDEN BOOK reserves the following pages for announcements of reputable banking houses, trust companies, savings banks, brokers, and other financial institutions. Inquiry is made concerning the institutions advertising under this heading and none is accepted that is found to be of questionable character. When writing to these institutions please mention THE GOLDEN BOOK.

Why the Investment Banker

When Liberty Loan bonds were being sold direct by the government—with, however, the patriotic assistance of every reputable banking house in the country—a man of broad education, a student of economic movements, asked the writer if the investment banker was not a species of middleman that the war was going to show us how to get along without. "Now that the government has shown the way," he said, "will not our large corporations hereafter sell their bonds direct to the public?"

Since the war our public utility companies have sold an enormous amount of preferred stock to their consumers and this has led other people to wonder if the need for the investment banker is passing. But the customer ownership campaigns of public utility companies have the special object in view of securing as partners in the companies, and therefore interested in their well being, those from whom the companies draw their revenues. The public utility officials admit that this financing is not accomplished as cheaply as it might be through investment houses, which, however, would distribute the securities to their established lists of clients and not to the customers of the utility companies.

Bonds and many stock issues are still being sold through investment houses. Isolated attempts have been made to market bond issues direct but these have not demonstrated that even under favorable conditions financing can be done more cheaply by the corporation that way than through the agency of the investment house. The investment banker performs a service to the corporation that makes him worthy of his hire. For that reason we are never likely to see a time when the great bulk of securities sold in this country are not underwritten by banking houses and by them distributed to the public. A growing corporation which sells bonds once in every two or three or four years will find it difficult and expensive to organize a bond selling campaign at such infrequent intervals in an effort to locate investors to take the bonds which it needs to sell. Under the present system it can go to houses and secure the money it needs without any uncertainty concerning it and if the bonds do not sell the investment house is the one that has to worry.

But even if corporations should do their financing direct without availing themselves of the advantages offered by underwriting houses, there would still be a more important place for the investment banker in the scheme of investment things. He now serves two masters—the corporation and the investor—and if the corporation could get along without him the investor should not. In fact if he should stop serving the corporation as he does now he might become a better servant and more valuable to the investor. The interests of corporations needing capital and investors who are in a position to furnish it are opposed to each other in some respects and therefore the investment banker who best serves the corporation might not best serve the investor.

The chief function of the investment banker is to discover the wells of capital throughout the country and lead the streams from them through rivulets and rivers into reservoirs where they are made available for financing the growing business of the country. His greater responsibility is, or should be, to these sources of capital, for only by continued fair dealings with his clients can he win their respect and confidence and place himself in a better position to serve those wishing to use this capital. He is a "conserver of wealth" and investors should not get along without him. Take the case of municipal bonds, for instance, which as a class rank high in the investment field. These are sold at public auction throughout the United States yet very seldom does an investor buy such bonds direct from the municipality offering them. The highest bids come from investment houses that are experienced in the handling of such securities. They have clients to whom they know or believe they can sell the bonds for a slightly higher price than they pay for them. These clients in turn are willing to pay the higher price because they want to know that every point covering the legality of the issue has been properly seen to and that there is proper provision for the payment of the interest and principal of the bonds. The

(Continued on page 26)

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(Continued from page 24)

investor cannot see to all these matters himself but he knows that if a reputable and experienced house offers them to him that these points have been seen to.

When it comes to corporation issues where there is a much greater variation in the security behind them than in municipal bonds the character of the banker or broker who recommends them is a still more consideration. If he is the right kind of a banker who has the interests of his clients at heart he has gone into the proposition much more thoroughly than any individual could do and should be able to form a much better opinion as to the future of the concern whose security he has offered and therefore as to the safety of the security.

In the case of foreign government bonds, which are becoming a more and more important factor in market and offer attractive returns for Americ investors, the need of the advice of a good investm banking house is of more importance to investors th in most other fields. It is impossible for the invest unaided to secure information on which to base opinion as to many of the foreign issues that have be and will be brought out here and therefore his d pendence upon the investment banker must be mo complete in that field than in most others.

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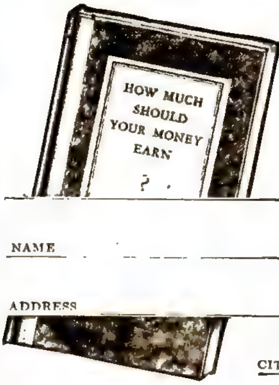

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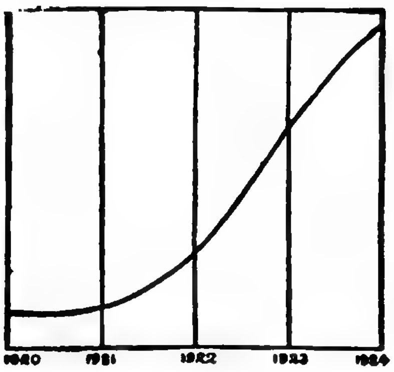

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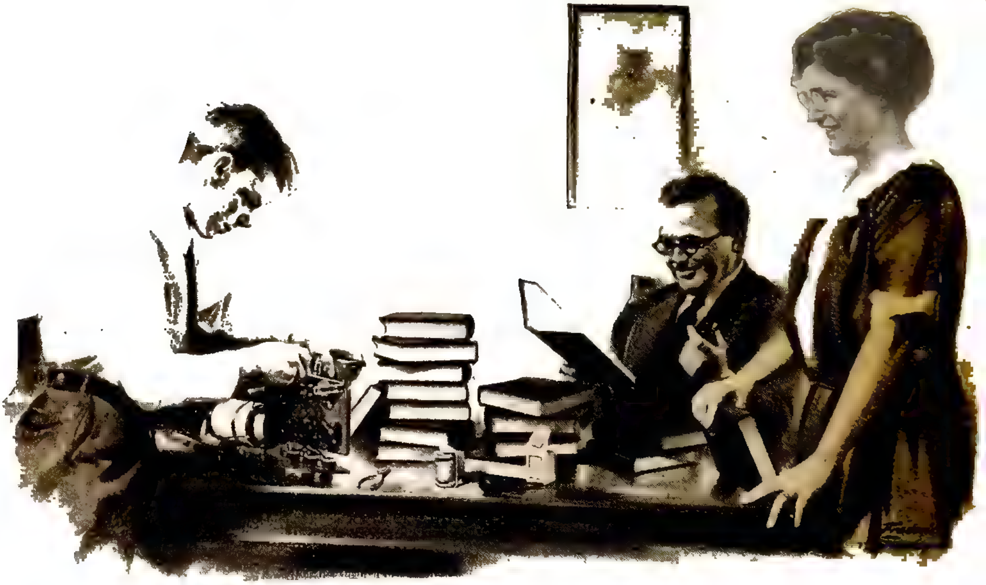

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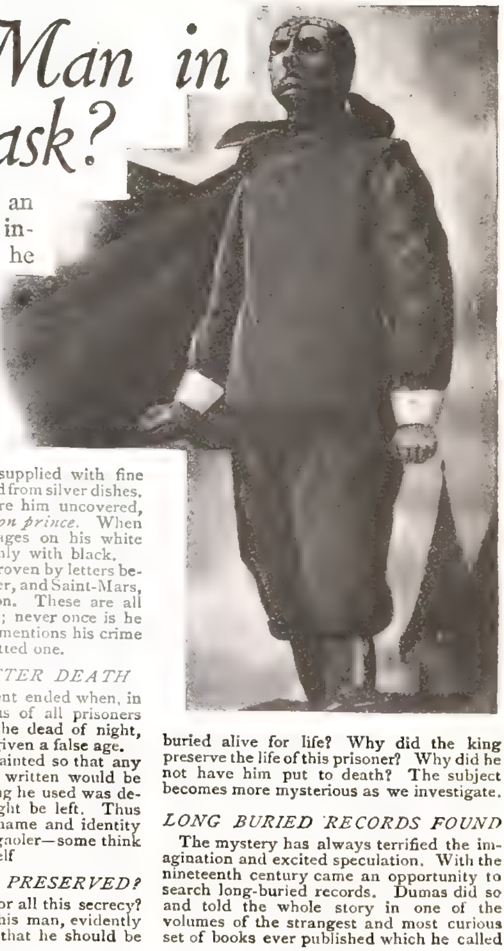

THIS mysterious prisoner on the ramparts of an island prison has always excited the most intense interest. What was the life which he xchanged for one silent as the grave? What had e done? Who was he? What was his past? The dissolute life of a courtier? Or the devious vays of an intriguing diplomat? Had some fair one in the hallowed circle of royalty loved not visely but too well? Why during all these years as he remained the greatest of all mysteries?

NONE DARED TELL SECRET

Some believe that he was a twin or even lder brother of Louis XIV, a true heir to he crown hidden from the time of his birth. Others think that he was the eldest illegitinate son of Charles II; or that he, and not ouis XIII, was the actual father of Louis XIV. Some have thought that he was the on of Buckingham and the Queen of France; thers, that he was the son of Louis XIV and De la Vallière. To have revealed it would ave cost anyone his life. The regent admited when drunk that the prisoner was a son f Anne of Austria and Mazarin. Louis XV efused to tell Madame de Pompadour. Iadame Campan stated that Louis XVI did ot know the secret. De Chamillart on his eathbed declined to reveal the secret.

ASKED—HIS FACE HIS SECRET

In 1669 there was hurried across France a asked man whose identity was shrouded in ystery. Never has a prisoner been guarded ith such vigilance and with such fear of his tory becoming known. He was taken to an land prison where the governor carried his ood to him; a confessor saw him once a year, ut no other visitor ever laid eyes on him. *e was always masked—his face alone ould tell his secret*

He was well treated; supplied with fine clothing, books, and served from silver dishes. The governor stood before him uncovered, and addressed him as *Mon prince.* When the prisoner wrote messages on his white linen he was supplied only with black.

He is not a myth, as is proven by letters between Louvois, the minister, and Saint-Mars, the governor of the prison. These are all written in veiled language; never once is he given a name. No letter mentions his crime or whether he had committed one.

SECRET EVEN AFTER DEATH

This horrible punishment ended when, in 1703, the most mysterious of all prisoners died and was buried in the dead of night, under a false name, and given a false age.

His cell was carefully painted so that any message he might have written would be covered up, and everything he used was destroyed lest any clew might be left. Thus vanished a man whose name and identity was unknown even to his gaoler—some think even to the prisoner himself

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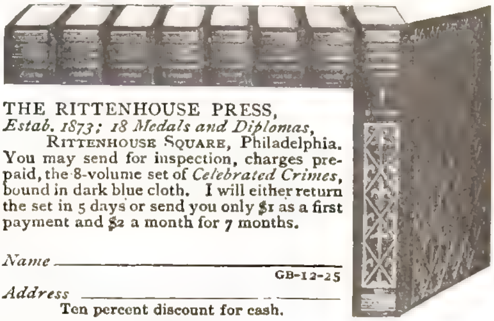

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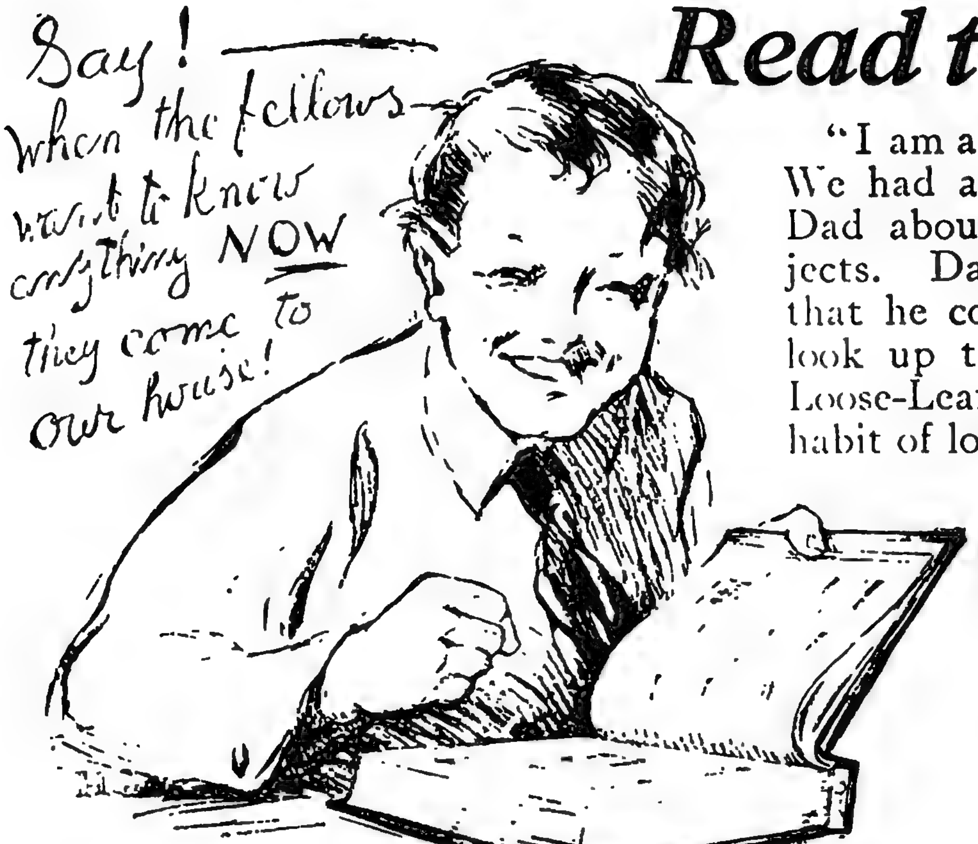
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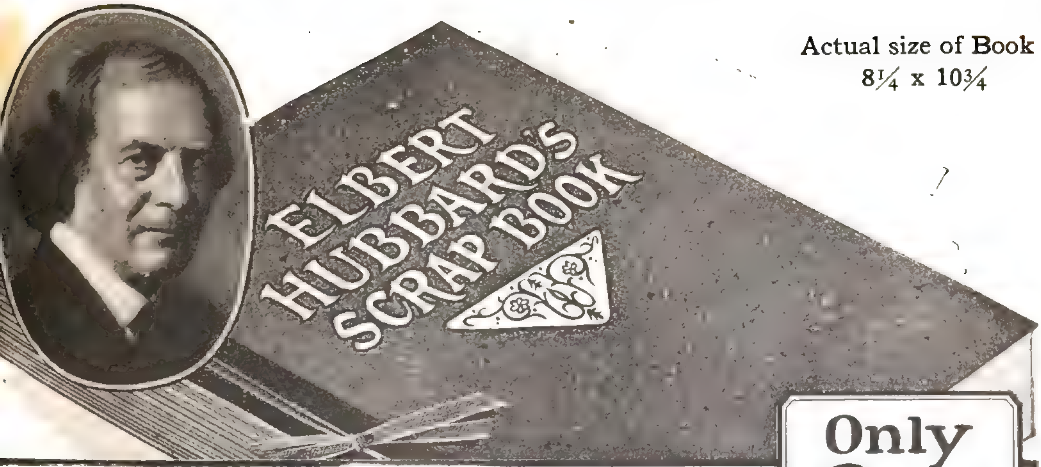

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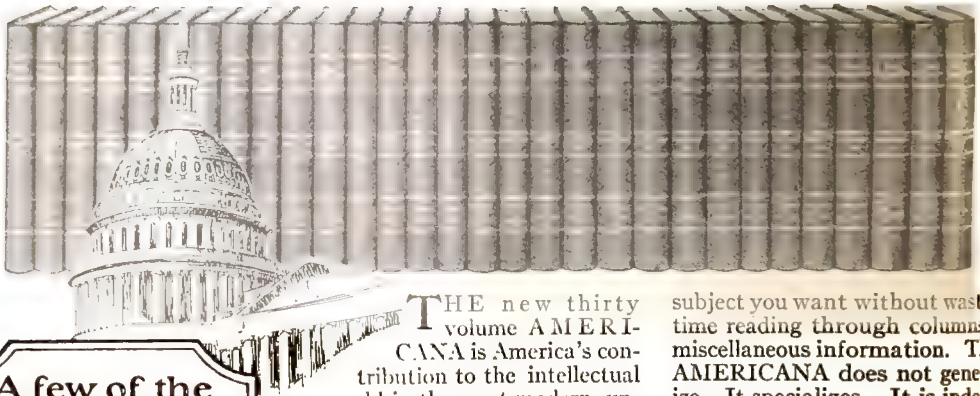

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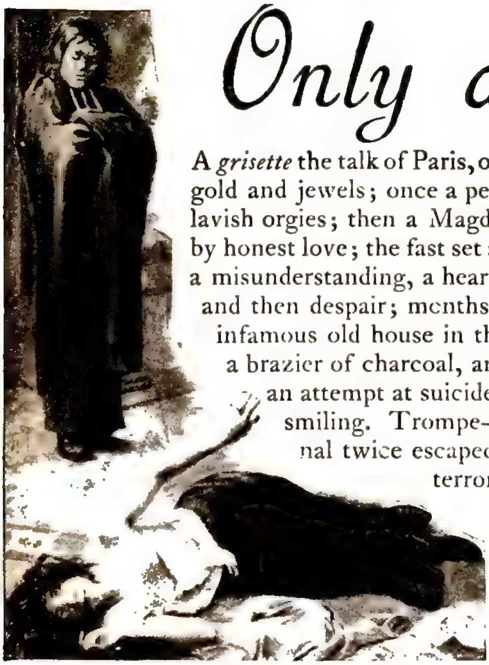

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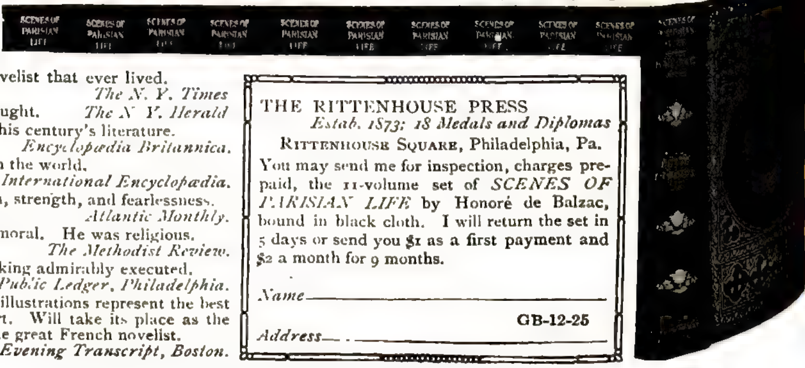

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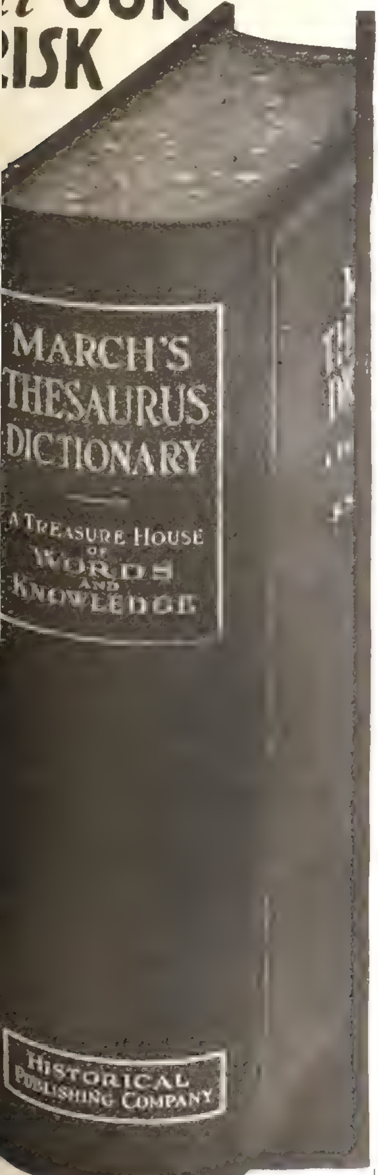
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I USED to pride myself on guessing people's ages. That was before I met Hobart Bradstreet, whose age I missed by a quarter-century. But before I tell you how old he really is, let me say this:

My meeting-up with Bradstreet I count the luckiest day of my life. For while we often hear how our minds and bodies are about 50% efficient—and at times feel it to be the truth—he knows *why*. Furthermore, he knows how to overcome it—in five minutes—and he showed me *how*.

This man offers no such bromides as setting-up exercises, deep-breathing, or any of those things you know at the outset you'll never do. He uses a principle that is the foundation of all chiropractic, naprapathy, mechanotherapy, and even osteopathy. Only he does not touch a hand to you; it isn't necessary.

The reader will grant Bradstreet's method of staying young worth knowing and using, when told that its originator (whose photograph reproduced here was taken a month ago) is sixty-five years old!

And here is the secret: *he keeps his spine a half-inch longer than it ordinarily would measure.*

Any man or woman who thinks just one-half inch elongation of the spinal column doesn't make a difference should try it! It is easy enough. I'll tell you how. First, though, you may be curious to learn why a full-length spine puts one in an entirely new class physically. The spinal column is a series of tiny bones, between which are pads or cushions of cartilage. Nothing in the ordinary activities of us humans stretches the spine. So it "settles" day by day, until those once soft and resilient pads become thin as a safety-razor blade—and just about as hard. One's spine (the most wonderfully designed shock absorber known) is then an unyielding column that transmits every shock straight to the base of the brain.

Do you wonder folks have backaches and headaches? That one's nerves pound toward the end of a hard day? Or that a nervous system may periodically go to pieces? For every nerve in one's body connects with the spine, which is a sort of central switchboard. When the "insulation," or cartilage wears down and flattens out, the nerves are exposed, or even impinged—and there is trouble on the line.

Now, for proof that sublaxation of the spine causes most of the ills and ailments which spell "age" in men or women. Flex your spine—"shake it out"—and they will disappear. You'll feel the difference in *ten minutes*. At least, I did. It's no trick to secure complete spinal laxation as Bradstreet does it. But like everything else one must know how. No amount of violent exercise will do it; not even chopping wood. As for walking or golfing, your spine settles down a bit firmer with each step.

Mr. Bradstreet has evolved from his 25-year experience with spinal mechanics a simple, boiled-down formula of just five movements. Neither takes more than one minute, so it means but five minutes a day. But those movements! I never experienced such compound exhilaration before. I was a good subject for the test, for I went into it with a dull headache. At the end of the second movement I thought I could actually feel my blood circulating. The third movement in this remarkable SPINE-MOTION series brought an amazing feeling of exhilaration. One motion seemed to open and shut my backbone like a jack-knife.

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Hobart Bradstreet frankly gives the full credit for his conspicuous success to these simple secrets of SPINE-MOTION. He has traveled about for years, conditioning those whose means permitted a specialist at their beck and call. I met him at the Roycroft Inn, at East Aurora. Incidentally, the late Elbert Hubbard and he were great pals; he was often the "Fra's" guest in times past. But

HOBART BRADSTREET, THE MAN WHO DECLINES TO GROW OLD

Bradstreet, young as he looks and feels, thinks he has chased around the country long enough. He has been prevailed upon to put his SPINE-MOTION method in form that makes it now generally available.

I know what these remarkable mechanics of the spine have done for me. I have checked up at least twenty-five other cases. With all sincerity I say nothing in the whole realm of medicine or specialism can quicker re-make, rejuvenate and restore one. I wish you could see Bradstreet himself. He is arrogantly healthy; he doesn't seem to have any nerves. Yet he puffs incessantly at a black cigar that would floor some men, drinks two cups of coffee at every meal, and I don't believe he averages seven hours sleep. It shows what a sound nerve-mechanism will do. He says a man's power can and should be unabated up to the age of 60, in every sense, and I have had some astonishing testimony on that score.

Would you like to try this remarkable method of "coming back"? Or, if young, and apparently normal in your action and feelings, do you want to see your energies just about doubled? It is easy. No "apparatus" is required. Just Bradstreet's few, simple instructions, made doubly clear by his photographic poses of the five positions. Results come amazingly quick. In less than a week you'll have new health, new appetite, new desire, and new capacities; you'll feel years lifted off your mind and body. This miracle-man's method can be tested without risk. If you feel enormously benefited, everything is yours to keep and you have paid for it all the enormous sum of $3.00! Knowing something of the fees this man has been accustomed to receiving, I hope his naming $3.00 to the general public will have full appreciation.

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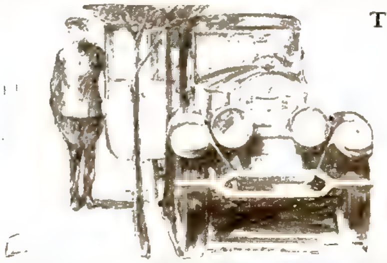

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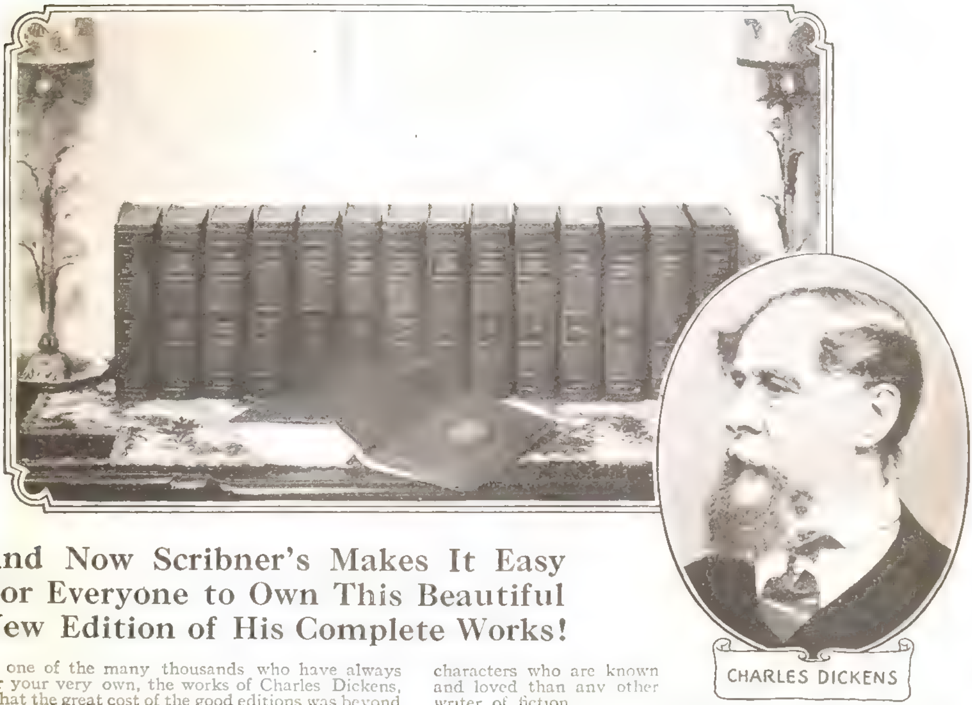

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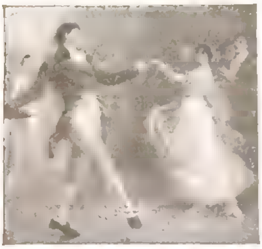

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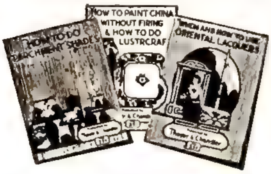

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1. Would You Write—

Between you and **I**	or	Between you and **me**
I did it already	or	**I have done** it already
Who shall I call	or	**Whom** shall I call
It's just **as** I said	or	It's just **like** I said
The river has **overflowed** its banks	or	The river has **overflown** its banks
I **would** like to go	or	I **should** like to go
I laid down to rest	or	**I lay** down to rest
Divide it **among** the three	or	Divide it **between** the three
The wind blows **cold**	or	The wind blows **coldly**
You will **find only** one	or	You will **only find** one

2. How Do You Say—

evening	**ev**-en-ing	or	**eve**-ning
ascertain	as-cer-**tain**	or	**as**-cer-tain
hospitable	**hos**-pi-ta-ble	or	hos-**pit**-able
abdomen	**ab**-do-men	or	ab-**do**-men
mayoralty	**may**-or-al-ty	or	may-**or**-al-ty
amenable	a-**me**-na-ble	or	a-**men**-a-ble
acclimate	**ac**-cli-mate	or	ac-**cli**-mate
profound	**pro**-found	or	pro-**found**
beneficiary	ben-e-fi-**shee**-ary	or	ben-e-**fish**-a-ry
culinary	**cul**-i-na-ry	or	**cu**-li-na-ry

3. Do You Spell It—

supercede	or	supersede	repetition	or	repitition
receive	or	recieve	separate	or	seperate
repreive	or	reprieve	acomodate	or	accommodate
donkeys	or	donkies	trafficing	or	trafficking
factories	or	factorys	acsesible	or	accessible

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ANSWERS

1.

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I have done it already
Whom shall I call
It's just as I said
The river has overflowed its banks
I should like to go
I lay down to rest
Divide it among the three
The wind blows cold
You will find only one

2.

eve-ning
as-cer-**tain**
hos-pi-ta-ble
ab-**do**-men
may-or-al-ty
a-**me**-na-ble
ac-**cli**-mate
pro-**found**
ben-e-**fish**-a-ry
cu-li-na-ry

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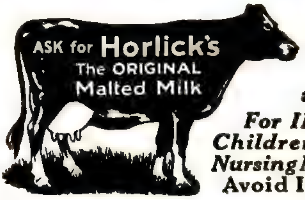

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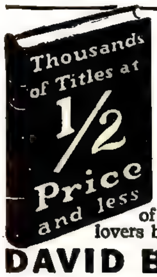

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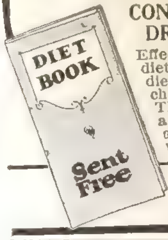

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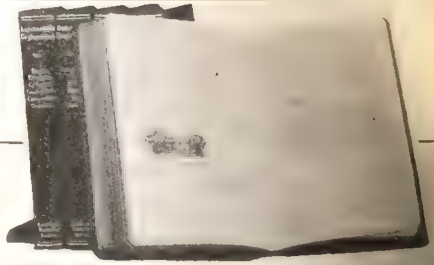

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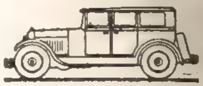

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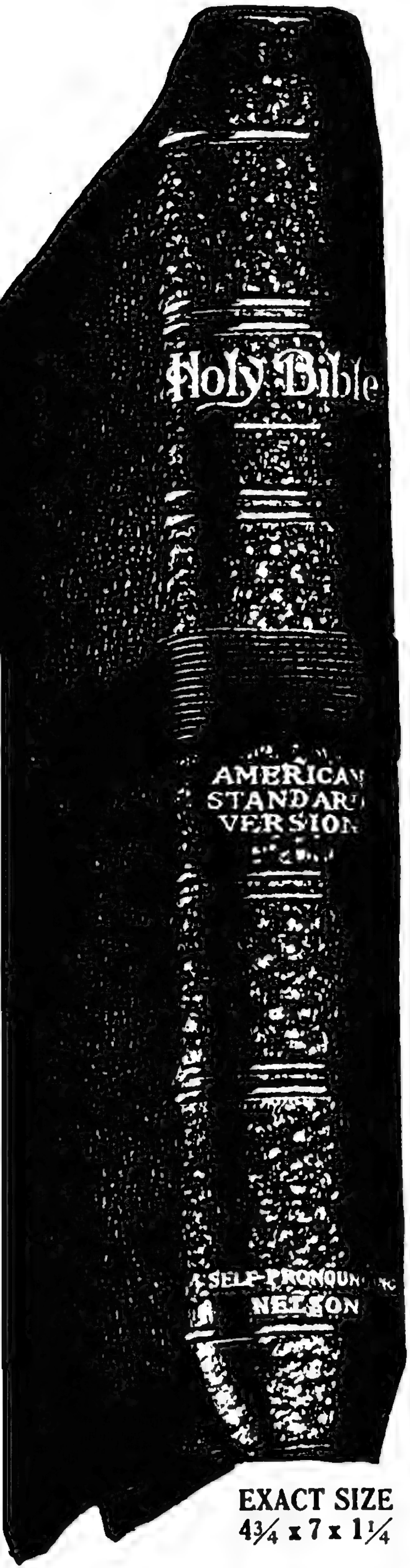

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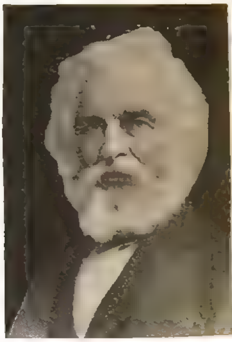

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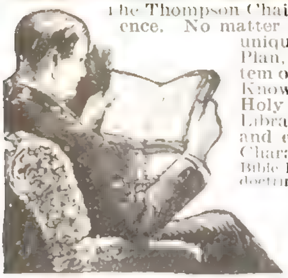

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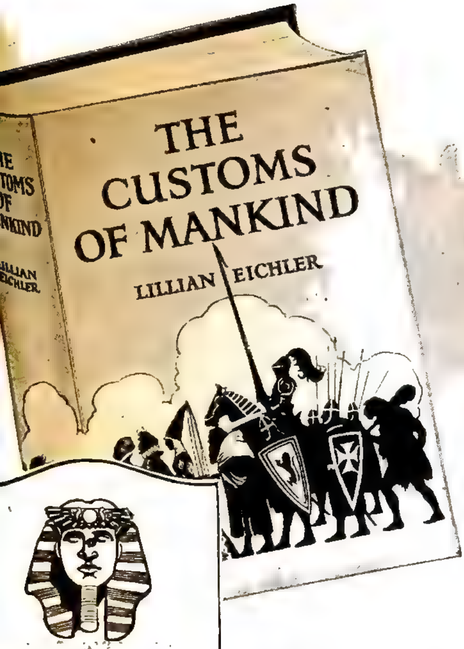

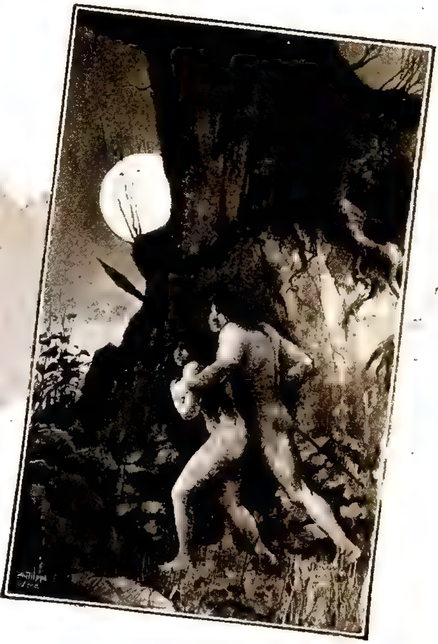

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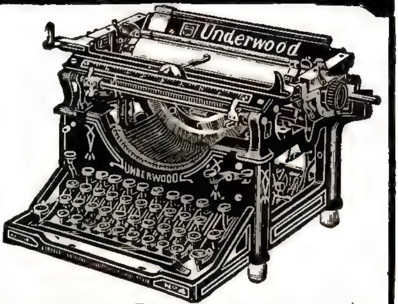

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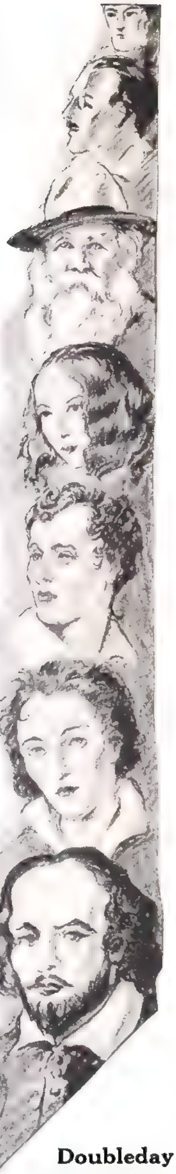

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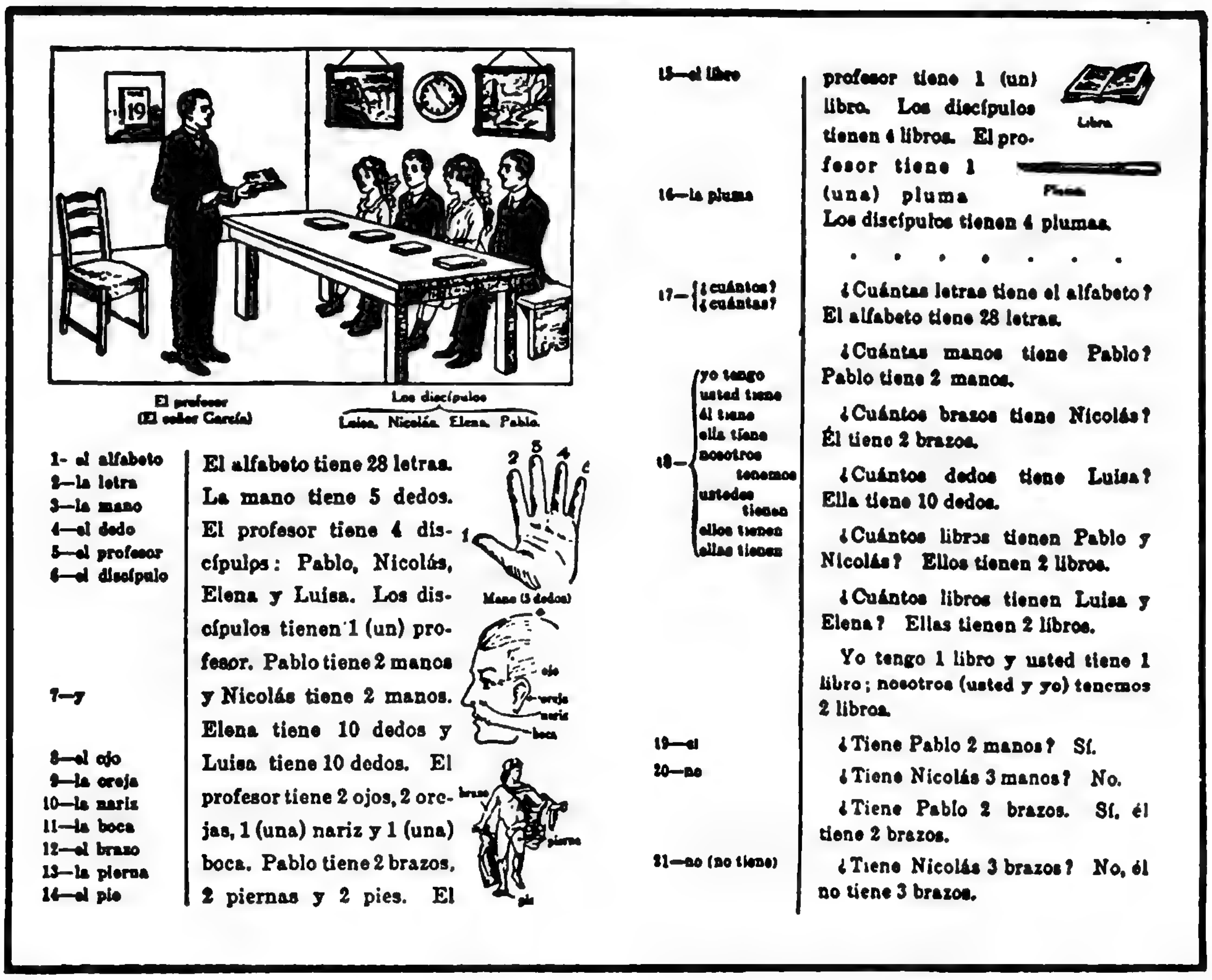

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16—la pluma
17—¿cuántos? ¿cuántas?
18—yo tengo, usted tiene, él tiene, ella tiene, nosotros tenemos, ustedes tienen, ellos tienen, ellas tienen
19—sí
20—no
21—no (no tiene)

. . . .

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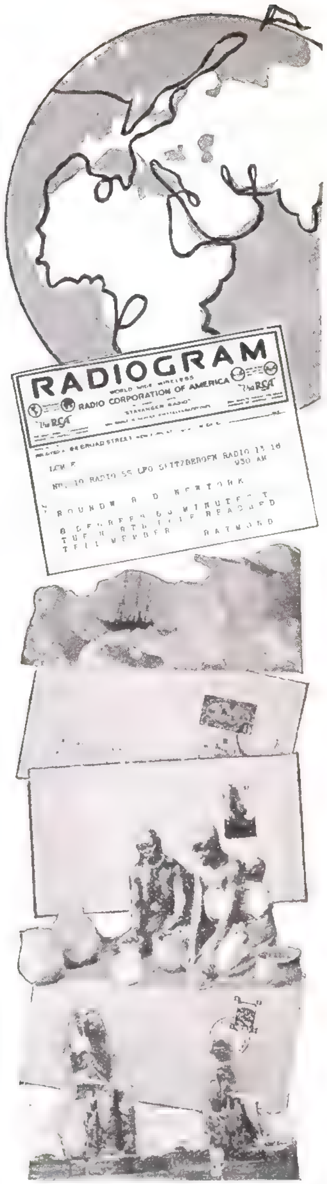

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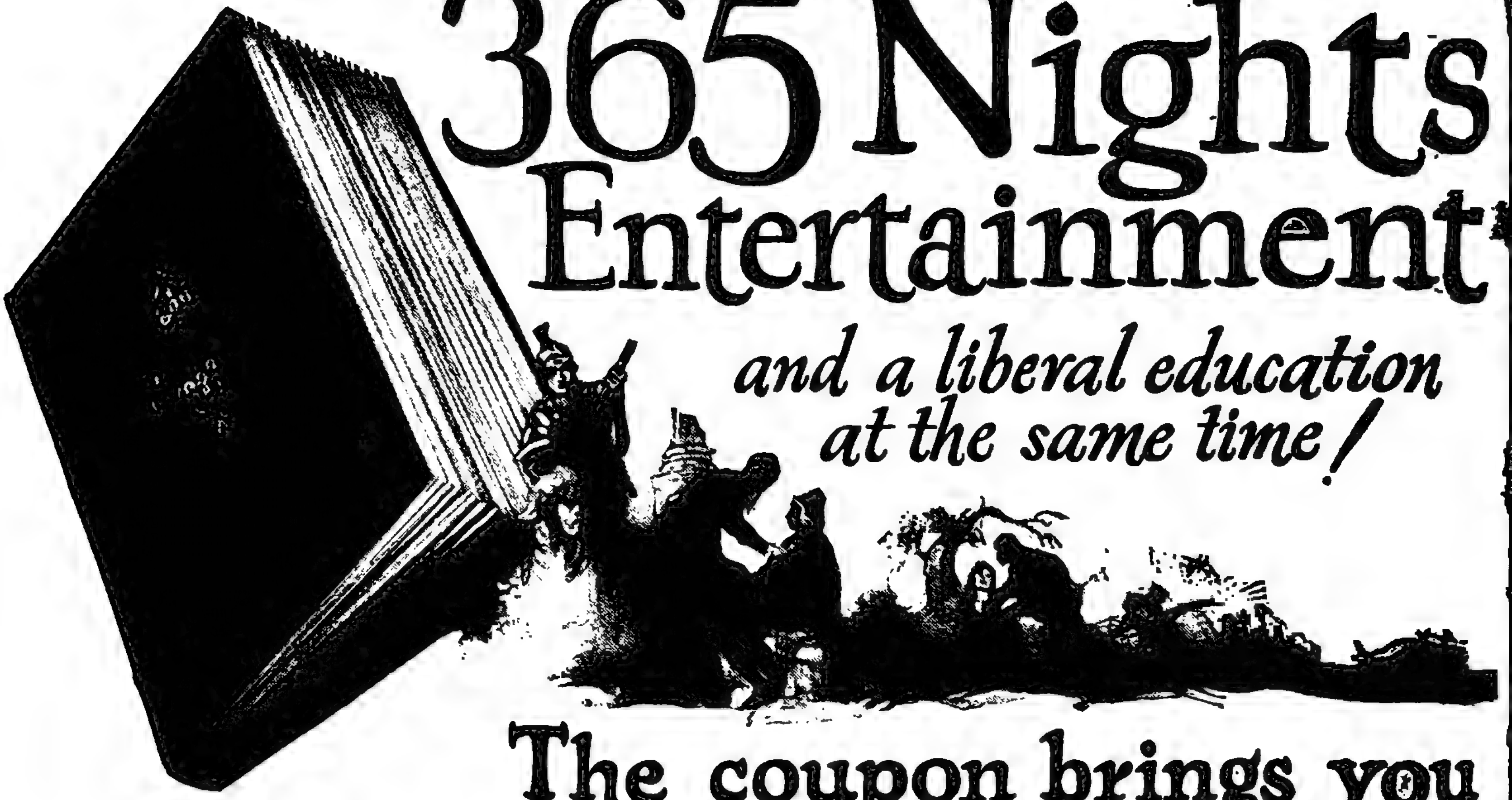

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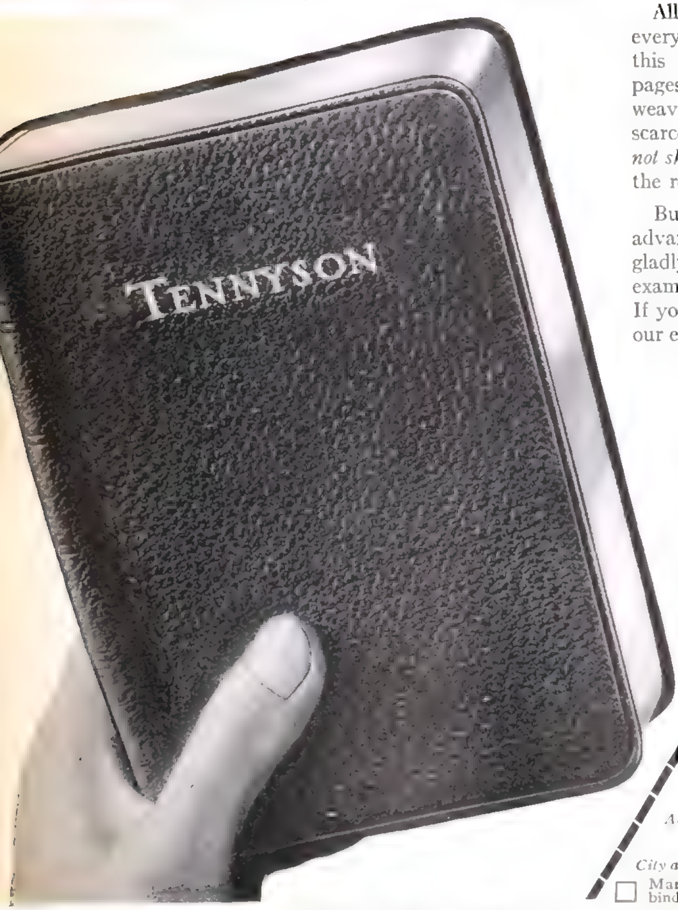

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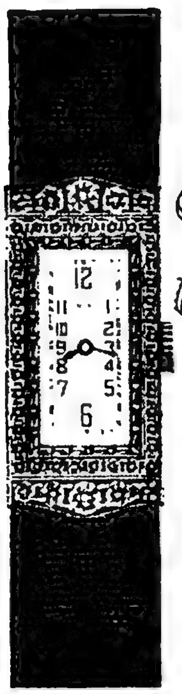

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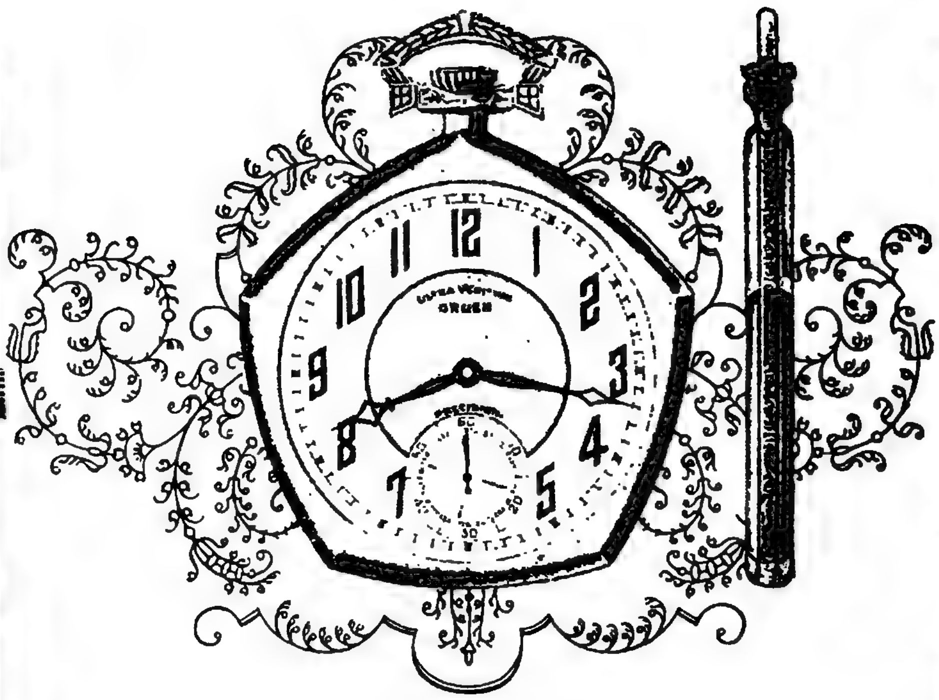

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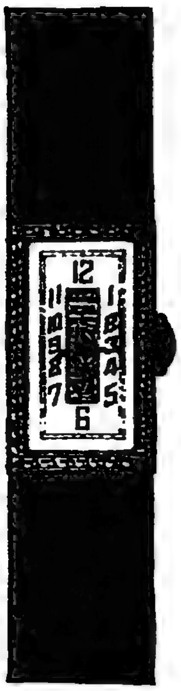

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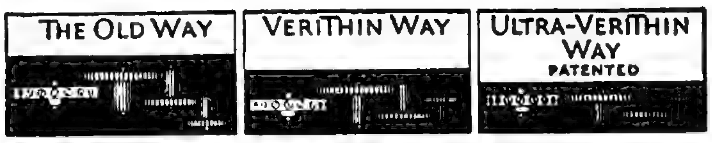

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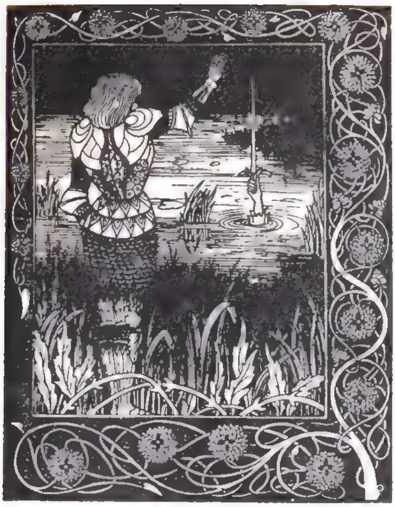

THE ARM
AND HAND
IN
WHITE SAMITE
THAT RECEIVED
EXCALIBUR

Drawn by
Aubrey Beardsley

What Is Romance?

She was the thing we call romance, which lives in the little hut beyond the blue haze of the pine woods. J. M. BARRIE.

Parent of golden dreams, Romance!
  Auspicious queen of childish joys,
Who lead'st along, in airy dance,
  Thy votive train of girls and boys. BYRON.

To be romantic is to have an inkling of the infinite in appearances. UHLAND.

If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild, but to flout, the ruins gray. SIR WALTER SCOTT.

Romance is the poetry of literature. MADAME NECKER.

In spite of your great sphinx eyes you have always seen the world as through a golden mist. FLAUBERT TO GEORGE SAND.

He loved the twilight that surrounds
The border-land of old romance,
Whose glitter hauberk, helm, and lance,
And banner waves and trumpet sounds,
And ladies ride with hawk on wrist,
And mighty warriors sweep along,
Magnified by the purple mist,
The dusk of centuries and of song. LONGFELLOW.

He cometh unto you with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner. SIR PHILIP SYDNEY.

Romance, however, is not a mountain made of gold, but a vein running some way through; and it must be engineered . . . or we consent to a debasing of the currency, which means her to-morrow's bankruptcy. GEORGE MEREDITH.

Some say that the age of chivalry is past. The age of chivalry is never past, so long as there is a wrong left unredressed on earth, or a man or woman left to say, "I will redress that wrong or spend my life in the attempt." CHARLES KINGSLEY.

(To be continued with some examples of ROMANCE *in a later issue)*

The Booklover's Calendar.

Roman: December was the tenth and last month. Martial calls it the smoky month; also *canus*, hoary. Women sacrificed to the Bona Dea, deity of fertility, on the 3rd or 4th; the 5th was the Faunalia Rustica; the Saturnalia, which became a byword to Christians, began on 17th and lasted several days.

Greek: Poseidon. Tasting the new wine initiated the Rustic Dionysia. Athens celebrated the Feast of the Threshing-floors later in month.

Saxon: Winter-monat, changing to Heligh-monat after the conversion.

American Indian: Long-night Moon. Among Zuni, Hunting Moon.

Hebrews: Kislev; from new moon, 18th, Tebet. Feast of Dedication, Hanukkah, commemorates recapture of Jerusalem by Maccabees. Fast of Tebet, 27th.

Zodiacal and Chinese: Sun leaves Sagittarius and enters Capricornus—which corresponds to the Ox station of the Yellow Road. On 22nd, even those of highest rank go before day to the Emperor's Temple, to bow, and congratulate the Son of Heaven on the arrival of the Winter Solstice.

Japanese: Shimotsuki, or Frost Month. Hari-no-Kuyo, when women take charge of house and entertain. Fairs in preparation for New Year.

Mohammedan: Jamâdâ-l-âkhir begins 17th. The 6th is anniversary of taking of Constantinople by the Ottomans under Mohammed II, A.D. 1453.

Hindu: Pausha follows Mārgásīrsha. Festivals of Koli Diali (whirling in a dance), and Putradaikadasi (26th), the "son-giving—eleventh-day."

Persian: The month Dâi.

What a fine frosty night; how Orion glitters; what Northern lights! Let them talk of their oriental summer climes of everlasting conservatories; give me the privilege of making my own summer with my own coals. MELVILLE.

1 First appeareance of The Young Roscius, aged 13, at Drury Lane Theater, 1804, of whom one newspaper declared that "his pleasing movements of perfect and refined nature must have been incorporated with his frame previous to his birth."

2 *Died: Cortes, 1547; St. Francis Xavier, 1552.* When the cup of life is full and flowing over, preserve some drop as a specimen sample. THOREAU.

3 *Flaxman died, 1826.*
Long each nose is, and its blowing tedious an affair as ever. HEINE.

4 *Carlyle born, 1795. Died: Richelieu, 1642; Drummond, 1649; Hobbes, 1679; Gay, 1732.*
It is an easy thing for men to be deceived by the specious name of liberty. HOBBES.

5 *Died: Wotton, 1639; Mozart, 1792; Bewick, 1795.*
What would become of a Greenland whale, say, in those shuddering, icy seas of his north, if unsupplied with his cosy surtout (blubber)? MELVILLE.

6 *Feast of St. Nicholas at Bari, Italy. Barham ("Ingoldsby Legends") born, 1788.*
So strong were the devotional tendencies of St. Nicholas, even from infancy, that . . . he refused to suck on Wednesdays and Fridays. CHAMBERS.

7 *Cicero killed, 43 B. C.*
The wistful stars
Shine like good memories.
HENLEY.

8 *Conception of the Virgin. Died: Scaramouche, 1694; de Quincey, 1859.*
The moon is a curving flower of gold. TEASDALE.

9 *Milton born, 1608.*
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new spangled Ore,
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky. MILTON.

10 (After reading de Tocqueville on Democracy in America):
The age of great men is going; the epoch of the ant-hill, of life in multiplicity, is beginning. AMIEL.

11 *Wesley born, 1757.*
TO BROOKLYN AUDIENCES AT PUBLIC CONCERTS:
Let us whisper in their ears that . . . no thoroughbred person nowadays ever expresses approbation with his *feet.* WALT WHITMAN.

12 *Colley Cibber died, 1757.*
Old Writers affirme, that few or no Divels are in the South, by reason of the plentiful light . . . and that whole Armies of Divels and Witches were in the North.
FYNES MORYSON.

13 *Drummond born, 1585; Dr. Johnson died, 1784.*
I would advise young ladies not to take snuff, nor old ones so much as to become loathsome to themselves, and disagreeable to others.
New England Farmer (1825)

14 *Nostradamus born, 1503; Washington died, 1799.*
Even the horses in the stable had long icicles from their muzzles, almost every morning.
BLACKMORE.

15 *Izaak Walton died, 1683.*
Nature was in her beryl apron,
Mixing fresher air.
EMILY DICKINSON.

16 *Jane Austen born, 1775; Grimm died, 1859.*
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.
EMERSON.

17 *Beethoven born, 1770. Kaspar Hauser killed, 1833.*

This is the only profit of frost, the pleasure of winter, to conquer cold, and to feel braced and strengthened by that whose province it is to wither and destroy. JEFFRIES.

18 This is the time to take your shrub indoors; but it should be rum shrub, watered in moderation, and taken at night over a cheerful fire. CRUIKSHANK.

19 Ef you want somepin', and
jes dead-set
A-pleadin' fer it with both eyes wet
And tears won' bring it, w'y you
try' sweat. RILEY.

20 That so many of the poor
should suffer from cold,
What can we do to prevent?
To bring warmth to a single body is
not much use.
I wish I had a big rug ten thousand
feet long,
Which at one time could cover up
every inch of the City.
PO CHÜ-I (WALEY).

21 *St. Thomas. Boccacio died, 1375.*

The ship of sunrise burning.
Strands upon the eastern rims.
HOUSMAN.

22 *Shortest Day.*

To a barber's shop to have my hair cut, and there met with a copy of verses mightily commended by some gentlemen there, of my Lord Mordaunt's. . . . But Lord! they are but sorry things; only a Lord made them. PEPYS.

23 *Drayton died, 1631.*

'Most all the time, the whole
year round, there ain't no flies
on me,
But jest 'fore Christmas I'm as good
as I kin be. EUGENE FIELD.

24 *Thackeray died, 1865.*

A Christmas gambol oft could
cheer
The poor man's heart through
half the year. SCOTT.

25 *Christmas. Isaac Newton born, 1642.*

It was the Winter wilde
While the Heav'n-born-childe
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger
lies;
Nature in aw to him
Had doff't her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize. MILTON.

26 *Gray born, 1716; Joel Barlow died, 1812.*

Better do a kindness near home than go far to burn incense.
CHINESE.

27 *Died: Ronsard, 1585; Lamb, 1834.*

When falls the snow, lo! ev'ry herb
and tree,
That in seclusion through the wintry hours
Long time had been held fast, breaks
forth in flowers
That ne'er in spring were known
upon the lea. TSURAYUKI.

28 *Holy Innocents' Day. Macaulay died, 1859.*

When the sun takes to shining in winter, and the southwest wind to blowing, the corners of the earth cannot hide from him. MEREDITH.

29 The multitudes of sedges, rushes, canes and reeds were the appropriate lyre of the cold. On them the keen winds played their dry music. MEYNELL.

30 *Roger Ascham died, 1568. Kipling born, 1865.*

His nose curved boldly forth, flushed with a frost-bitten bloom, that seemed the very trophy of a December blast. IRVING.

31 *New Year's Eve ("Hogmanay"). Wycliffe died, 1384.*

How many observe Christ's Birthday! How few his Precepts! O! 'tis easier to keep Holidays than Commandments.
"POOR RICHARD."

The Golden Book Magazine

VOLUME II DECEMBER, 1925 NUMBER 12

Mademoiselle de Doucine's New Year's Present

By ANATOLE FRANCE

Translated by Alfred Allinson

Anatole France

ON JANUARY 1st, in the forenoon, the good M. Chanterelle sallied out on foot from his hotel in the Faubourg Saint-Marcel. He felt the cold and was a poor walker; so it was a real penance to him to face the chilly air and the bleak streets which were full of half-melted snow. He had refused to take his coach by way of mortifying the flesh, having grown very solicitous since his illness about the salvation of his soul. He lived in retirement, aloof from all society and company, and paid no visits save to his niece, Mademoiselle de Doucine, a little girl of seven.

Leaning on his walking-cane, he made his way painfully to the Rue Saint-Honoré and entered the shop of Madame Pinson at the sign of the *Panier Fleuri*. Here was displayed an abundant stock of children's toys to tempt customers seeking presents for this New Year's Day of 1696. You could scarce move for the host of mechanical figures of dancers and tipplers, birds in the bush that clapped their wings and sang, cabinets full of wax puppets, soldiers in white and blue ranged in battle array, and dolls dressed, some as fine ladies, others as servant wenches, for the inequality of stations, established by God himself among mankind, appeared even in these innocent mannikins.

M. Chanterelle chose a doll. The one he selected was dressed like the Princess of Savoy on her arrival in France, on November 4th. The head was a mass of bows and ribbons; she wore a very stiff corsage, covered with gold filigrees, and a brocade petticoat with an overskirt caught up by pearl clasps.

M. Chanterelle smiled to think of the delight such a lovely doll would give Mademoiselle de Doucine, and when

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Madame Pinson handed him the Princess of Savoy wrapped up in silk paper, a gleam of sensuous satisfaction flitted over his kind face, pinched as it was with illness, pale with fasting and haggard with the fear of hell.

He thanked Madame Pinson courteously, clapped the Princess under his arm and walked away, dragging his leg painfully, toward the house where he knew Mademoiselle de Doucine was waiting for him to attend her morning levée.

At the corner of the Rue de l'Arbre-Sec, he met M. Spon, whose great nose dived almost into his lace cravat.

"Good morning, Monsieur Spon," he greeted him. "I wish you a happy New Year, and I pray God everything may turn out according to your wishes."

"Oh! my good sir, don't say that," cried M. Spon. "'Tis often for our chastisement that God grants our wishes. *Et tribuit eis petitionem eorum.*"

"'Tis very true," returned M. Chanterelle, "we do not know our own best interests. I am an example myself, as I stand before you. I thought at first that the complaint I have suffered from for the last two years was a curse; but I see now it is a blessing, since it has removed me from the abominable life I was leading at the playhouses and in society. This complaint, which tortures my limbs and is like to turn my brain, is a signal token of God's goodness toward me. But, sir, will you not do me the favour to accompany me as far as the Rue du Roule, whither I am bound, to carry a New Year's gift to my niece, Mademoiselle de Doucine?"

At the words M. Spon threw up his arms and gave a great cry of horror.

"What!" he exclaimed. "Can it be M. Chanterelle I hear say such things—and not some profligate libertine? Is it possible, sir, that living as you do a religious and retired life, I see you all in a moment plunge into the vices of the day?"

"Alack! I did not think I was plunging into vice," faltered M. Chanterelle, trembling all over. "But I sorely lack a lamp of guidance. Is it so great a sin then to offer a doll to Mademoiselle de Doucine?"

"Yes, a great and terrible sin," replied M. Spon. "And what you are offering this innocent child to-day is meeter to be called an idol, a devilish simulacrum, than a doll. Are you not aware, sir, that the custom of New Year's gifts is a foul superstition and a hideous survival of Paganism?"

"No, I did not know that," said M. Chanterelle.

"Let me tell you, then," resumed M. Spon, "that this custom descends from the Romans, who, seeing something divine in all beginnings, held the beginning of the year holy also. Hence, to act as they did is to do idolatry. You make New Year's offerings, sir, in imitation of the worshippers of the God Janus. Be consistent, and like them consecrate to Juno the first day of every month."

M. Chanterelle, hardly able to keep his feet, begged M. Spon to give him his arm, and while they moved on, M. Spon proceeded in the same vein:

"Is it because the Astrologers have fixed on the first of January for the beginning of the year that you deem yourself obliged to make presents on that day? Pray, what call have you to revive at that precise date the affection of your friends? Was their love dying then with the dying year? And will it be so much worth the having when you have reanimated it by dint of cajolements and baneful gifts?"

"Sir," returned the good M. Chanterelle, leaning on M. Spon's arm and trying hard to make his tottering steps keep pace with his impetuous companion's, "sir, before my sickness, I was only a miserable sinner, taking no heed but to treat my friends with civility and govern my behaviour by the principles of honesty and honour. Providence hath deigned to rescue me from this abyss, and I direct my conduct since my conversion by the admonitions the Director of my conscience gives me. But I have been so light-minded and thoughtless as not to seek his advice on this question of New Year's gifts. What you tell me of them, sir, with the authority of a man alike admirable for sober living and sound doctrine, amazes and confounds me."

"Nay! that is indeed what I mean to do," resumed M. Spon,—"to confound you, and to illumine you, not indeed by my own lights, which burn feebly, but by those of a great Doctor. Sit you down on that wayside post."

And pushing M. Chanterelle into the archway of a carriage gate, where he made himself as easy as circumstances allowed, M. Spon drew from his pocket a little parchment-bound book, which he opened, and after hunting through the pages, lighted on a passage which he proceeded to read out loud amid a gaping circle of chimney-sweeps, chambermaids, and scullions who had collected at the resounding tones of his voice:

"'We who hold in abhorrence the festivals of the Jews, and who would deem strange and outlandish their Sabbaths and New Moons and other Holy Days erst loved of the Almighty, we deal familiarly with the Saturnalia and the Calends of January, with the Matronalia and the Feast of the Winter Solstice; New Year's gifts and foolish presents fill all our thoughts; merry-makings and junketings are in every house. The Heathens guard their religion better; they are heedful to observe none of our Feasts, for fear of being taken for Christians, while we never hesitate to make ourselves look like Heathens by celebrating their Ceremonial Days.'

"You hear what I say," went on M. Spon. "'T is Tertullian speaks in this wise and from the depths of Africa displays before your eyes, sir, the odiousness of your behaviour. He it is upbraids you, declaring how 'New Year's gifts and foolish presents fill all your thoughts. You keep holy the feasts of the Heathen.' I have not the honour to know your Confessor. But I shudder, sir, to think of the way he neglects his duty toward you. Tell me this, can you rest assured that at the day of your death, when you come to stand before God, he will be at your side, to take upon him the sins he hath suffered you to fall into?"

After haranguing in this sort, he put back his book in his pocket and marched off with angry strides, followed at a distance by the astonished chimney-sweeps and scullions.

The good M. Chanterelle was left sitting alone on his post with the Princess of Savoy, and thinking how he was risking the eternal pains of hell fire for giving a doll to Mademoiselle de Doucine, his niece, he fell to pondering the unfathomable mysteries of Religion.

His legs, which had been tottery for several months, refused to carry him, and he felt as unhappy as ever a well-meaning man possibly can in this world.

He had been sitting stranded in this distressful mood on his post for some minutes when a Capuchin friar stepped up and addressed him:

"Sir, will you not give New Year's presents to the Little Brethren who are poor, for the love of God?"

"Why! what! good Father," M. Chanterelle burst out, "you are a man of religion, and you ask me for New Year's gifts?"

"Sir," replied the Capuchin, "the good St. Francis bade his sons make merry with all simplicity. Give the Capuchins wherewith to make a good meal this day, that they may endure with cheerfulness the abstinence and fasting they must observe all the rest of the year—barring, of course, Sundays and Feast Days."

M. Chanterelle gazed at the holy man with wonder:

"Are you not afraid, Father, that this custom of New Year's gifts is baneful to the soul?"

"No, I am not afraid."

"The custom comes to us from the Pagans."

"The Pagans sometimes followed good customs. God was pleased to suffer some faint rays of his light to pierce the darkness of the Gentiles. Sir, if you refuse to give *us* presents, never refuse a boon to our poor little ones. We have a home for foundlings. With this poor crown I shall buy each child a little paper windmill and a cake. They will owe you the only pleasure perhaps of all their life; for they are not fated to have much joy in the world. Their laughter will go up to heaven; when children laugh, they praise the Lord."

M. Chanterelle laid his well-filled purse in the poor friar's palm and got him down from his post, saying over softly to himself the word he had just heard:

"When children laugh, they praise the Lord."

Then his soul was comforted and he marched off with a firmer step to carry the Princess of Savoy to Mademoiselle de Doucine, his niece.

* * *

When a woman gives in, she ought to do it thoroughly. H. G. Wells.

A man thinks that whatever vexation a woman is suffering from, his kisses can put it right. D. H. Lawrence.

She said: "I only want a little bit of you." And he answered: "In love there are no little bits." Galsworthy.

The Gift of the Magi

By O. HENRY

O. Henry

ONE dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at $8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the lookout for the mendicancy squad.

In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young."

The "Dillingham" had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid $30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to $20, the letters of "Dillingham" looked blurred, as though they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called "Jim" and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard. To-morrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only $1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only $1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling—something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honour of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier-glass in an $8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its colour within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee, and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: "Mme. Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds." One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the "Sofronie."

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it."

Down rippled the brown cascade.

"Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practised hand.

"Give it to me quick," said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain, simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation—as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value—the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for t, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he ometimes looked at it on the sly on account f the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxica-ion gave way a little to prudence and eason. She got out her curling irons and ighted the gas and went to work repairing he ravages made by generosity added to ove. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends—a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was overed with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant choolboy. She looked at her reflection n the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

"If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to erself, "before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island horus girl. But what could I do—oh! what could I do with a dollar and eighty-even cents?"

At 7 o'clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: "Please God, make him think I am still pretty."

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two—and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

"Jim, darling," she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again—you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say 'Merry Christmas!' Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice—what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you."

"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet even after the hardest mental labour.

"Cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?"

Jim looked about the room curiously.

"You say your hair is gone?" he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

"You needn't look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you—sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered," she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, "but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?"

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year—what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

"Don't make any mistake, Dell," he said, "about me. I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first."

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

For there lay The Combs—the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped for long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise shell, with jeweled rims—just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, "Oh, oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

"Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it."

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

"Dell," said he, "let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on."

The magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat, who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.

Civilization

By YÜAN CHIEH (*Eighth Century*)

Translated by Arthur Waley

TO THE southeast—three thousand leagues—
The Yüan and Hsiang form into a mighty lake.
Above the lake are deep mountain valleys,
And men dwelling whose hearts are without guile.
Gay, like children, they swarm to the tops of the trees;
And run to the water to catch bream and trout.
Their pleasures are the same as those of beasts and birds;
They put no restraint either on body or mind.
Far I have wandered throughout the Nine Lands;
Wherever I went such manners had disappeared.
I find myself standing and wondering, perplexed,
Whether Saints and Sages have really done us good.

Winter

By V. G. KOROLENKO

Вл. Короленко.

Translated by Zénaïde A. Ragozin

WE WERE travelling southward, along the bank of the river Lena, but winter was overtaking us from the north; yet it seemed to be confronting us, too, coming down the course of the river.

September had been pretty mild around Yakutsk; not a particle of ice was to be seen on the river. At one of the stations nearest the city, we were even tempted by the beauty of the moonlit night into refusing to spend it in the station-keeper's close hut, which had just been coated on the outside for the winter with fresh dung, still warm. So we made our beds on the river bank, inside boats, and covered ourselves with deerskins. In the course of the night, however, I had a feeling as if somebody were burning my right cheek with a hot iron. I awoke and saw that the moonlit night had grown still whiter. Everything around me was covered with hoar-frost, so was my own pillow, and it was the touch of it that gave me the illusion of being burned. My companion, who slept in the same boat with me, probably had dreamed the same thing. The moon shone right in his face, and I could see the frightful grimaces which convulsed it from time to time. His sleep was profound and, probably, most painful. At the same time, my other fellow-traveller raised himself, in the next boat, partly removing the fur coats and robes that were heaped upon him. They were all white and fluffy with rime, and he looked like a white phantom born of the cold sheen of the frost and the moonlight.

"Brr-r," he shivered. "Eh, but it's cold, friends! . . ."

The boat swayed under him, and the movement caused a clanking in the water, like that of broken glass. This was the first rim-ice "setting" in places protected from the swift current, very thin as yet, showing traces of the long crystal-like brittle needles, which broke with a sound like fine glass. The river seemed to slacken in its course under the first heavy blow of Old Winter's club, while the rocks of its hilly banks, on the contrary, looked lighter, more airy, seeming to recede into vague, lucent distance, sparkling, almost phantomlike in their dress of white frost.

Such was the first greeting of winter at the start of a long journey: cheerful, challenging, almost playful.

As, slowly and with many delays, we moved farther southward, the winter gained strength. Vast shoals and shallows already stood thinly crusted with dark, pure, virgin ice, and a stone, thrown from the bank, would be long rolling and sliding over the smooth surface, causing a strange, chimelike tinkling, gradually swelling in volume and taken up by the mountain echoes. Farther on, the ice, now having firm hold of the river edges and of the quickly hardening shore strips, already withstood the impetus of the current. Winter extended his conquests. The frozen shore strips were widening, and every step in the strife was marked by a line of broken ice cakes showing where the current, but lately swift and strong, had again retreated a couple of yards towards the middle.

A little later snow appeared here and there on the banks, contrasting vividly with the dark, dull water. Later still the small mountain streams joined the fight. Gradually descending from their river-heads, they continually kept breaking up the ice at their mouths and throwing it into the Lena, encumbering the current left free, and hindering the river's own struggle with the enemy. The broken line rose higher and higher, the ice cakes, thrown out by the current on the edges of the shore strips, grew thicker and thicker. They already formed actual ramparts, and, looking from the bank, we sometimes could perceive the beginning of an alarming commotion among these ramparts. That was when the river angrily flung, against the immovable masses that fettered it, such ice cakes as still floated freely on its open channel, beating breaches in them, smashing the ice into bits, splitting it into long, sharp needles, crushing it into snow, only impotently to retreat in the end, and after a while it turned out that the white broken line had advanced some more, the frozen belt had grown wider and the river bed narrower.

As time went on, the fight grew more stubborn, the grandeur of it more striking. The river now no longer tumbled insignificant ice cakes, but hurled huge blocks, piling them up in monstrous disorder. The scene grew ever more disconsolate. Nearer to the banks the piles already froze solidly into shapeless masses, while in the middle they still heavily tossed and wheeled in chaotic confusion, screening from view the gradually closing channel, as a brutal crowd might screen from the public gaze the place of execution. All nature seemed spellbound in fear and mournful, solemn expectation. The desert passes of the mountainous shores docilely reverberated the dry crash of the breaking ice-floes and the heavy groaning of the succumbing river.

Still a little while, and the dark stream in the middle of the river had grown slushy white, and on its surface, slowly shuffling and revolving, colliding, grazing, and shoving one another, and softly rustling, thickly floated the white cakes, ready to be welded into the icy pall which was finally to press the life out of the tamed and conquered current.

II

One day, watching from a small promontory, we espied, amidst these slowly moving masses, a black object, which stood out plainly against the yellowish-white background. In the wilderness everything attracts attention, and our little caravan at once broke out into animated talk and guesses.

"A crow," said one.

"A bear," suggested another.

Opinions divided. To some the black speck appeared not bigger than a crow, to others not smaller than a bear. The remote monotony of those moving masses, lazily floating along between high mountains, distorted the entire perspective.

"Whence should a bear have found his way to the middle of the river?" I demanded of the man who had emitted the bear hypothesis.

"From the opposite bank. Year before last a she-bear crossed from yonder island with three cubs."

"Animals even now are crossing all the time to our side; that promises a fierce winter," added another.

"The cold drives them," put in a third speaker.

Our entire caravan held up around the promontory, to watch the approach of the object which had aroused the general interest. The white ice-slush, meanwhile, was slowly drawing nearer and we could see that the black spot upon it was shifting its position, seeming really to advance towards our side of the river, stepping from one ice cake on to another.

"Why, brothers, that's a mountain goat!" at length exclaimed one of the men.

"Two of them," corrected another, looking more closely.

Sure enough, mountain goats they were, and there were, indeed, two of them. Now we could clearly make out the two dark, graceful little figures in the midst of that icy hell. One was somewhat bigger than the other. Probably mother and daughter. The ice cakes all around them tossed, clashed, whirled, and crumbled, and, at every collision, there was a seething and foaming, and throwing up of spray in the interstices between the cakes, and the dainty creatures, all alert, stood on a comparatively large cake, their slender feet bunched together, poised for a spring.

"Well, what's going to happen, I wonder!" spoke a young lad, deeply interested.

A huge ice cake, which was floating ahead of that on which the goats stood, slackened its speed somewhat, then began to revolve, hindering the movements of those behind it. This caused around the animals a chaos of splashing and destruction. The cakes stood up vertically, climbing on top of one another, splitting and breaking with a loud crash like the rattle of firearms. At times, dark chasms opened and closed between them. The two wretched little specks of life entirely disappeared for a moment in the chaos, but the next moment we caught sight of them on another ice cake, again bunching their poor little feet, ready for another spring. This was repeated several times, and each new spring brought them, with well-calculated directness, nearer our side and away from the opposite side.

Already it was possible to perceive the plan followed by the intelligent animals.

Not far from us the promontory protruded in a sharp point into the river, and there the ice cakes, driven asunder by the current, broke with extraordinary violence. But the remoter ones, which avoided the line of shock, were at once seized by the receding counter-current and carried back to the other side. The elder of the goats, who evidently managed the operation, directed their course so that every leap brought them nearer to this promontory, groaning as it was under the thundering onslaught of the ice run. Whether or no she saw us, she took no notice of our presence. We were standing immovably on that same promontory, and even the large ferocious station dog, which had volunteered to follow us, and was watching with pointed ears, plainly took a wholly impersonal interest in the issue of these daring and tragically-dangerous manœuvres. When the goats were quite near the land, within some dozen yards of our little crowd, they still thought of nothing but the collisions of the ice cakes and their own desperate leaps. As the cake on which they stood, slowly revolving, approached the critical point, we held our breaths. One instant. . . . A dry crash, a chaotic wreckage of fragments hurled up into the air, then falling down and creeping along the ice-coated edges of the promontory; then—two black bodies, flying with the lightness of well-aimed missiles over the chaos and landing on the bank. They landed safely. But just beyond the other edge of the narrow strip was a dark streak of water, and our crowd barred their progress. But the clever animal did not hesitate a second. I noticed the strangely confident look in her round eyes; then she made straight for us, showing the way to her young companion. The station dog, a big, shaggy Polkan, stepped aside in a dazed sort of way, when the elder goat, shielding the younger with her body, bounded past him, almost grazing his rough coat with her flank. The dog ran to one side with his tail down and a puzzled look, as though wondering at his own forbearance and fearful lest it might be misinterpreted. But we applauded his self-restraint and gladly looked at the ridge above us, where two slender bodies seemed to be flying, stretching full length, over the crags, from summit to summit.

III

We had travelled the last stage with a casual companion, Ivan Radionovitch Sokolsky, the head of a prospecting party. I know not what life-tempest had cast him into that remote part of Siberia, and he had ceased from struggling to get away, having grown to like a prospector's existence, so rich in varied experiences. He was a large man, with a weather-beaten face, a mane of partly blanched hair, and features which seemed frozen hard, so difficult was it for them to express any emotion; his feelings were as safely hidden from sight under this impenetrable countenance as a river current under the fettering ice. In his vehicle, which I had shared with him for this stage, he had a gun in a chamois-leather case, and, although it stood close by his hand, he had not stirred that hand to take it out. His hard grey eyes had never left the animals, and, for the first time in the course of my acquaintance with him—but brief, it is true—I thought I caught in those grey orbs a gleam of something not quite cold and not wholly hardened.

When the little incident had thus been happily solved, we all took our seats again, and our caravan moved on, stretching in a long line under cover of the rocky river bank. We all somehow felt happy, and discussed the daring feat of the animal which had managed to preserve such self-possession in the midst of so many dangers.

"Still," I remarked, with a smile, "something must be credited to us, too. It almost looks as though extreme cold has the faculty of awakening kind feelings."

"What makes you think so?" seriously inquired Sokolsky.

"The very unusual way in which the dog Polkan behaved, and also—if you will excuse the comparison—your own conduct: your gun stayed in its case."

"Yes," assented the prospector, "that is true. These poor animals had overcome so many dangers, right before our eyes, that even Polkan, I think, would have been ashamed to end it all with a vulgar murder on the river bank. By the way, did you notice with what self-abnegation the elder goat shielded the younger from the dog? Would every human have acted thus under similar circumstances?"

"Any mother, I should think," I replied, with a smile. "On the whole, this little episode appears to have impressed you deeply."

For Sokolsky's features bore the traces of inner emotion; his eyes had softened to sadness.

"True," he answered, meditatively. "This has reminded me of a man and an experience I had. . . . You just said something about cold in connection with kind feelings. Well, no! Cold—that is death. Has it ever occurred to you, for instance, that it is possible for conscience to freeze to death in a man?"

"Not only that, but it is possible for the whole man to turn into a lump of ice, *i. e.*, to cease being a man," I replied, still smiling. I thought my fellow-traveller's mood more and more peculiar.

"No," he replied in the same gently-sad tone; "no—much sooner. I'll tell you, if you like to hear. . . . Curiously enough, the thing happened in almost this very locality, and now, riding here with you, I feel as though I am living over again the beginning of my story, while you will travel on and meet with its continuation.

IV

"It happened in 18—. At that time I had just received an appointment and was going to the placer with a companion. The autumn had set in late, just like the present one; the winter was delayed, and our progress was slow. Somewhere about here we hit the first ice, the same as now; but, as we advanced, its grip on the river strengthened, the free current narrowed more and more, and, in places, was intercepted by ice jams. Look! You can see from here what it is like. On one spot, huge masses gather, jostle one another, and block the current. The river piles them up higher and higher, smashes the ice, forms rapids, roars, and rages. Miles around, the air is resonant with the rumble and thunder of it. Then the ice breaks through and floats down the current, and here and there, in the middle of the river, free spaces are left, above which hover vapours, dense with frost. I had a companion, an exiled Pole. He had taken part in the great insurrection and had been wounded. Those were cruel times and his wrists and ankles bore the lifelong marks of the irons which convicts had to wear on the long march to their place of exile, in severest winter weather, without any bandages to protect the flesh against the bite of the frozen metal. He was, as a consequence, extremely sensitive to cold. Altogether he was a puny, feeble creature, body and soul just holding together, as the saying is. But in this frail shell lived a mighty spirit. Take him altogether, he was the strangest compound of contradictory qualities. His name was Ignatovitch."

Sokolsky here paused, lost in thought, and for some time we drove on in silence. This silence lasted quite a while, and I was just going to remind him of his interrupted narrative, when he again turned to me.

"I am afraid I cannot make you understand this man's nature,—idealistic, romantic, grown up on his great native poets, Mitskevitch, Krassinsky, Slovatsky. This state of mind, this, let us say, ecstatical hyperbolism, has always been foreign to us Russians. Mitskevitch has a strange poem: Somebody, a gigantic Self, has lifted his head into the superstellar altitudes. All around that head is a crown of suns, the hands reach the stars and, at their touch, their choir, like the keys of some obedient instrument, burst into the symphony of the worlds, the creation of his brain. . . . That's the kind of thing. . . . Such images always left me cold, and it was with some astonishment I used to hear my friend (we lived together about a year in Yakutsk) roll them off with uncommon fire and enthusiasm. Still, while I do not myself perceive any plausibility or beauty in such imagery or such a state of mind, I had to admit that they are capable of awakening responsive emotions: under their influence my little friend seemed to grow, his voice became sonorous, his eyes shone, and something, not the images, which appeared to me as unnatural, as exaggerated and wildly strange—as ever—no, but the sound of his voice, appealed even to me.

"I suppose this may come under the head of romanticism, this hyperbolic conception of man, of the 'Divine' in him, of his titanic import. But this mentality of my friend's lacked consistency. It was, I believe, at the time of those very insurrections which brought him to Siberia that human nature showed him its less attractive and, at all events, anything but divine aspects. Then there was something about a woman. Now, when woman is regarded as abiding in superstellar altitudes, a creature all of light, the wrong side of her essence naturally is apprehended with morbid sensitiveness. However that might be, he had long spells of misanthropy. At such times, he became well-nigh unbearable, especially in the daily contact of intimacy. In his look, cold and piercing, you felt something like contempt,—contempt towards you, a stranger, a passer-by, and towards himself as well.

During those periods, he was transformed nto a materialist and cynic, so bitter of speech that I used to take myself off, anywhere, and stay away, several days, if possible. In the meantime, he would tend he animals with even more than usual olicitude.

"Love for animals was another striking eature of this strange man. There were engthy periods when our modest dwelling positively was turned into a hospital. A week at a time, he would fuss over some half-frozen crow which he had revived, would walk a sick horse twice a day, unheeding jeers and mockeries. And, curious o observe, the more wroth he was with man, he greater was his tenderness to animals. Pessimist and cynic (at such periods) in his elations to 'the king of creation,' he ended by extolling Nature's lesser children above him. He not only recognized in them ntellect, memory, reasoning, conscience, but went the length of considering these ntellectual attributes as belonging to them, to the exclusion of man. And when this mood was upon him, he became unbearably, devilishly sarcastic and witty, and sometimes, when I had no place to retire to during his spells of misanthropy, and absolutely wilted under his hail of paradoxes, I began, upon my word, to feel inferior to any dumb beast, while some wretched cur, its back half broken by a missile from some idle oafer's hand, almost assumed in my eyes he proportions of a conscious sufferer and philosopher. But when the paroxysm had run its course, he recovered, was himself once more, again soared up into the empyrean, and spouted 'the symphony of the worlds.' It was at such a time he got his appointment to a position at the diggings, something like superintendent of a warehouse of materials. In practical questions, I always was the better man. So it was I who found the position for him and persuaded him to accept it. He submitted passively, and we started as soon as we received the travelling money. Our circumstances were not the most brilliant.

"Still, we travelled rather faster than you are doing now, and, in spite of our clothes being not of the warmest, we had not felt he cold over much until we got to Olekma, and even farther on. It was pretty cold, but we would get thoroughly warm when we stopped for the night and feel all right when we started again next morning.

"Beyond Olekma, the river was frozen olid, with just a few open spaces. Once, when driving past one of the holes, we beheld two ducks,—the driver pointed them out with his whip. I could not now make you realize what a pathetic sight it was. They were stragglers. The migrating flock had gone long ago, and these two, from sickness or failing strength, had lagged behind, and were left to perish on the freezing river. So long as the middle, at least, had been free, they had swum, somehow escaping from the ice, then the channel had narrowed more and more, till only these open spaces were left; when they should close, the birds must perish. Now they were tossing about in clouds of frosty vapor, and nothing all around but the cold impassable mountains, frowning down upon them.

"I remember that the driver laughed, grinned, baring his white teeth. I felt uncomfortable and chilly, and wrapped my big fur coat closer about me, as though the dark, cold element were yawning under my own feet. But my companion flared up in the utmost agitation.

" 'Stop!' he shouted at the driver. 'Would you indeed be capable of going on your way, leaving them thus?' He turned to me with bitter reproof, and, without waiting for the driver to rein in the horses, he sprang to the ground; then, slipping and stumbling on the heaped-up blocks of ice he rushed to the open water.

"The driver laughed like mad, and I myself could not help but smile at the sight of my companion bending over the narrow but long open channel and endeavouring to capture the ducks. They, naturally, rushed away from him. Then my little fellow-traveller ran to the lower end of the channel, correctly calculating that the current would carry the birds to him, the more surely that I, getting interested in the game, also walked out on the ice and drove them down river. They were afraid of diving, because the current would have drawn them under the ice. One of them managed to rise up into the air, but the other was too feeble to attempt flight, possibly having, at some time, had a taste of lead besides, and could only flap powerless wings. Then the other, after circling once or twice above the frozen river, returned to its companion.

"I cannot describe to you the effect this generosity had on my friend. He stood on the ice, following with his eyes the flight of the bird, as it flashed past, against the background of the stern, snow-clad mountains, and, when it splashed down into the water a few steps from the invalid, with the evident self-sacrificing resolve to share its companion's danger, tears stood in his eyes, and he positively declared that we might go on if we chose, but he would stay until he succeeded in securing both ducks.

"I knew that he would inevitably do as he threatened, and so decided to take part in the peculiar hunt, which the driver ended by joining. It resulted in one bird drowning—the very one which had attempted to fly. It escaped out of my hands, dived, and was sucked under the ice by the current. The other one was caught by the driver; Ignatovitch got a good wetting; the water poured down his sleeves.

"This was serious, as it was quite a distance to the next station. I bundled him up as well as I could; but when we reached the station it was all we could do to rub life into his half-frozen fingers, and we did not exchange a word for the next twenty-four hours. We took the duck along with us, but, although I had helped rescue it, and even got excited over this charitable sport, still I was conscious that it had been silly sentimentality, especially as this extra passenger was made much fun of at every station,—justly, as I had to admit. Ignatovitch felt this my attitude and despised me.

"The duck died, after all, and we threw it away. For several days the snow fell unceasingly, thick and soft as down, and lay twenty inches deep on land and ice. Heavy loads of it burdened the trees and it sometimes fell from them in large lumps, which crumbled to fine dust in the frosty air.

"Then the real cold was upon us: 30-35-40° below zero (Réaumur). At last, at one station, we found the mercury frozen in the tube and were told that it had been so several days already.

"Birds lagged in their flight, flapped their wings convulsively, and dropped to the ground; bears, half frozen in their dens, came out, lean, scared, and wicked. Squirrel hunters had to desist for fear of the angry beasts.

"We, too, began to feel the cold. You know what it means, do you not? When breath fails you,—when, every time you blink, fine threads of ice form between your lashes, when the cold steals under your clothing, under your skin, into your muscles, bores into your bones, into the marrow of them, as the saying aptly expresses it. . . . You begin to shiver, deep down in your inside, a piercing, disagreeable,—nay, humiliating feeling. You arrive at a station-house; it is midnight before you get really warm, and, when you start in the morning, you feel that something has gone out of you; you begin to suffer sooner than you did the day before, and you are still colder when you reach your night's lodging. Your spirits flag, your impressions are dulled, people become objects of dislike. You even loathe yourself. You end by muffling up as closely as possible, setting down as comfortably as you can, and moving, even thinking, as little as possible; you instinctively avoid the least expenditure of energy. And there you sit, gradually stiffening, only wondering, with a vague fear, when there will be an end of these terrible 40-50-verst relays.

"We at length neared Vitem. We had left the preceding station on a cloudless, brilliant morning. All nature, frigidly beautiful, seemed dead in her amazingly rich attire. At noon, the sun shone brilliantly, its slanting rays yellow and close set. Breaking through the dense gloom of the pine forest, they played in places on the trunks and boughs, plucking them out of the monotonous, white glimmering twilight.

"The stage had been unusually long. The driver (they did not travel the road very often) had at first been quite brisk and had even risked snatches of some absurd ditty of the diggings, then he had grown silent and every little while got down and alternately ran and hopped along beside the sleigh, violently stamping his feet and clapping his heavy-mittened hands. My fellow-traveller seemed quite numb. All through the day, he had spoken only once, but his voice struck me as creaky and rough and I made a cross reply, hardly intelligible to myself. After that he kept silence, and I could well imagine his face, with its misanthropical and ugly expression. I also held my tongue and turned my face aside, so that my frozen breath should not strike it through the opening in my *bashlik*.

"The road entered the forest. The runners creaked; the horses every little while snorted; then the driver halted and, with his fingers, extracted lumps of ice out of their nostrils. The tall pines swept by like white phantoms, and somehow left no impression on the memory.

"Evening was coming on; the last sunbeams, still denser and more yellow, were retreating from the forest, creeping along the summits, while below, the even, white twilight assumed a cold, bluish tint. The jingling bell gave a peculiarly deep and hard sound, like that of a spoon striking umbler filled with liquid. This sound omehow irritated and grated on the nerves.

"In one place, I received an unexpected npression: not far from the road a thin hread of smoke was swirling up from among ome wind-fallen wood. A man was sitting n a stump, and his figure was the one dark pot in that white world. Over him, from ll sides, hung broad white-furred boughs, till illumined from above by the departing un and encompassed from below with the nurkiness of approaching night. The thing ust flashed past my fixed stare. At the last nstant, I thought that the figure stirred, nd that the movement had something to o with us, with our jingling bell, our swift notion. But I did not turn my head, did ot even look that way. The vision flashed ast and was gone, and the impressions vere conveyed to my brain, numb, lifeless, mmovable, waking nothing in it and without stirring the imagination.

"The driver turned to us, said something, nd I remember that he laughed. But to ne these were only detached sounds, like the inkle of clashing icicles. The words were oid of meaning; they did not, at the noment, convey anything to me. The river's laugh also was no laugh to me; at east it did not produce on me the impression t would have produced under other conditions. I simply saw an unpleasantly yelowish face framed in a furred hood, and wo eyes fringed with rimy lashes. The aw belonging to the face was working, the nouth was disagreeably distorted, and out f it there issued, along with the vaporized reath, certain empty sounds, like the inkling of glass. That was all. My ompanion stirred uneasily and also muttered something. It looked as though he vere angrily bidding the driver hurry up.

"The brief day had long died out when ve reached the station and made our rrangements for the night.

"It consisted, I mind me, like most such tations, of a group of wretched huts, uddled together under overhanging cliffs. n choosing sites for these stations, little egard was had to the comfort of future nhabitants. This particular station was ocated on an open stony platform projecting into the river, which here turns in a end, on a plain open directly to the north. Only a few versts farther on the hamlet night have been sheltered behind a jutting nountain spur, while here it stood absoutely unprotected, a prey to the terrible orth wind.

"Ignoring its official denomination, the inhabitants called this 'the cold station.' And, truly, it would have been difficult to find anything more perfectly embodying the idea of cold than this wind-shaken heap of logs, clay, and dung on a snow-covered rocky platform. The forest, which we had left behind, ended where the low meadows began and yielded no protection to the hamlet, merely filling the air with long-drawn-out ominous soughing.

"All the same, we were glad of even such a shelter and were just in time to thaw out our benumbed limbs. Fortunately, there was, all around, enough wood belonging to no one but God, so that a great fire was soon blazing on the hearth, and we lay down right before it on skins and blankets spread out on the floor, after hastily swallowing a tumbler of tea. Our numb, stiffened hands could with difficulty hold the tumbler, and the sensation of heat was lost; we burned our throats with the scalding liquid, but it did not warm us, so we desisted and crept under our furs. My teeth were still chattering. I felt the shivering chill in my very bones.

"Our host, having finished our tea and given some to the half-frozen driver, added fuel to the fire and disappeared in some corner or other. It grew dark and very still. Outdoors the only sound was a sort of even, hollow rumble as of some giant at intervals treading the frost-bound earth, which then would subside into silence, until the giant started again and the rumble began anew. These spells grew more frequent and lasted longer as the night advanced. At times our hut seemed to rock and shiver, and the rumble would be inside of it, as in an empty wooden box in which the wind plays. Then, in spite of my furs, I would feel the cold steal through the fissures in the floor; it would fan the fire into a brighter blaze and make the sparks fly in bunches up the chimney.

" 'That's bad!' the host said on one such occasion, turning to the sleep-ridden driver. 'How ever will you travel? It's the north wind.'

" 'Yes,' replied the other. 'And the cold has not moderated. With such a wind as that, even the mail won't travel.'

" 'Heaven forbid!' spoke the host, yawning.

"I understood that this was the beginning of a comparatively rare phenomenon,—a frost-storm, when the wind, in a violent rush from some quarter, impinges on the frost-weighted air. The separate shocks and the rumble betokened the wind's first efforts, before it had acquired the power to displace the condensed atmosphere. Soon the shocks lasted longer, the rumble became even, uninterrupted. The air chilled down to 40 below zero (R.), yielded to the pressure, and it was as though gigantic ocean waves were rolling over our denuded platform.

"It was to this weird sound I began to fall asleep, still incompletely conscious of what was going on, with merely animal enjoyment at the thought that I was under a roof, lying by a good fire, that all the unpleasant numbness and stiffness in me must soon thaw out and limber up.

V

"When and how I found myself wide-awake,—sleep entirely gone from me, I can not say. I awoke gradually and for some time seemed to be still dreaming or carefully treasuring in my memory fragments of a dream, as if fearful it might escape me and I be unable to gather from it something very necessary, very important. Yet the dream was very simple.

"I dreamed that I was again in the forest, travelling the same road, and again I was cold, again I saw around me the frost-laden trees, the yellow, closely set rays of the sun, retreating from the forest and playing in places on the bare trunks and furry boughs. Only somewhere, beyond the forest, there was a dull, hollow reverberation of sound, as though some one was pursuing our sleigh.

"Then I saw a group of trees—standing so close together that their outspread boughs, white with their burden of snow, formed a sort of arbour—and a thin thread of seemingly-expiring smoke, and a dark figure by the dying fire. And, with the absence of logical sequence habitual to dreams, all this somehow took the form of sharp icicles which pierced and chilled my heart.

"Then I saw the driver's face, at first stolid, empty of all expression, but gradually changing, growing familiar; and, under his glance, the icicles in my breast began to melt with torturing rapidity. At the same time, the arbour in the forest rose before me with all the details which I had not noticed before, and each such detail bred peculiar impressions in my imagination, and I was afraid to look at the face of the man, who seemed to be stirring on his stump, but the driver insisted that I should look. I grew angry, but the next instant it was not the driver at all. but Ignatovitch, and, under the influence of his agonizing gaze, all that lay hidden in the depths of my memory as cold, colourless icicles suddenly melted and revived. . . ."

The narrator here paused, but, after a while, went on:

"You surely remember the legendary stories told by mediæval travellers of polar countries: how that words spoken in mid-winter freeze and stay frozen, as little icicles, awaiting the return of the warm weather, when they thaw and become audible once more. If we take this as a metaphor, it holds a profound meaning. So I now suddenly remembered the words which the driver had spoken on the road and which until this minute had lain somewhere in the deepest recesses of my memory, void of sense. Yes; undoubtedly, he had spoken of that man in the forest, had said that he must have 'gone broke somewhere at the diggings,' and must be tramping it from camp to camp. . . . Only now did these words thaw in my mind and fill my breast with a dull ache.

"With an involuntary groan I opened my eyes. The fire had burned low. The wind was still raging outdoors; my fellow-traveller's face was bending over me.

"Never in my life, either before or after, have I seen anything more awful than that face, illumined by the tremulous flare from the hearth. It was absolutely distorted with horror and a torturing question. The lower jaw trembled, his teeth chattered as with ague.

" 'What is it? For God's sake!' I cried, rising to my feet.

" 'Don't you know?' he said, fixing me with dim, lustreless eyes. 'Tell me, is it but a dream?'

" 'Is what . . .?'

" 'That which made you groan just now and awake,' he replied gruffly, then looked at me suspiciously, and, seeing I did not answer, he continued to scrutinize my face with the same expression of distrust.

" 'Did you not notice. out there, in the forest . . . a man?'

"I remained silent and involuntarily looked away. He spoke again:

" 'Look here, say something . . . I still think it was a dream. It cannot have been real. We cannot have . . .'

" 'If not a dream, it was almost like one . . . Such cold dulls any impression.'

"He made an impatient movement and abruptly sat down. His eyes flashed with a strange light.

" 'Really?' He said this plaintively, but immediately went on with a sort of wild energy:

" 'Don't lie! Don't squirm! I also lied. I knew it was real. We saw it all. All. That man was rising; he tried to shout something. You know that; and I know it; we knew it then. You will look up excuses . . . Conscience is frozen . . . Oh, yes, of course—it is always so. Let the body's temperature drop two degrees, and conscience straightway freezes. A natural aw. But care for one's personal comforts and vile pharisaic hyprocrisy, those do not freeze, oh no! . . . Oh, vile! Contemptible!'

"He seized his head in both hands, and several minutes passed in absolute silence. The hut still shivered from time to time, but the rumble had ceased, though I again felt the shocks and had the positive impression that some one, huge and heavy, was stamping with measured strides over the river, the forest, and the mountain passes.

" 'Oh, do get up at last, you . . . you villain!' almost screamed Ignatovitch, with frantic hatred. 'Why, you and I, we have murdered a man between us. Do you realize that, selfish animal that you are? Get up, man!' he called to the host. 'Call them all . . . My Lord! what's to be done now?'

"The host's frightened face appeared in the illumined space around the hearth. He had been stirring uneasily the last minute or two, listening to the unintelligible, excited talk of the strangers, who spoke of murder. Still half asleep, scared,—probably not so much at the words as at the wild energy which sounded in the voice of the all but crazed man,—he jumped up quickly and began to bundle on his clothes anyhow; then without a word, he opened the door and went out into the night. Our driver also awoke, yawned, rose from his place on the floor and threw a few logs on the fire. He evidently did not understand what it was all about. A child began to cry in a corner, and we could hear a woman's voice soothing it.

"All these details remain forever graven in my memory, and never shall I forget that terrible night: the dark hut with the crowd silently pouring into it, and the incessant rumble. Do you know, there is at times something extraordinarily like conscious meaning in the voices of Nature, especially when she threatens."

VI

"See here, won't you tell me the rest?" I inquired after a while, seeing that my companion was lost in thought and appeared to have forgotten all about his narrative, staring straight in front of him at the sunlit hills on our side of the river; the river itself and the ice on it we could not see just then, as we were driving across a meadow. My fellow-travellers were jogging on ahead of us, merrily chatting with their driver.

"Oh, yes, pray excuse me!" the narrator caught himself up. "I got to thinking. These are very sad memories; but, of course, I will tell it all to the end. Where did I stop?"

"You were saying that a crowd was pouring into the hut, summoned, probably, by your host."

"Yes, yes; that's it. He had called them in, thinking there really were murderers to be secured. The men were coming in tumultuously, yawning, crossing themselves, and they pressed all to one side, leaving an open space around us. The corner by the door was soon filled with dark figures, whose frightened faces were turned our way with eager curiosity, those in the foremost rank stretching their necks the better to see us. The last to come in was the *starosta* ('elder') with his assistants. He walked right up to us with a determined air and addressed us rudely, visibly intent on getting up his courage and that of his men.

" 'Well, what evil thing have you been after? Confess before God and our sovereign lord.'

"But when I began to explain, something like disappointment gradually settled on all those countenances. These men's lives were usually so dull and uneventful and my story, confused and incoherent as it was, did not possess for them the thrilling, tragic meaning it had for us. There was even a laugh somewhere in a corner.

" 'Why, that must be Mitrokhin, the new settler,' said someone.

" 'It's surely him. He has been hanging around the diggings, they say, for the last three weeks. He's a nuisance.'

" 'That's so,' our driver put in his word as he entered. 'He was here day before yesterday, and asked for a horse. "Take me, for God's sake," he said, "my feet won't carry me." '

" 'Well, and did you?' gruffly asked the *starosta*.

" 'We are tired of all the trouble with these people. Besides, he had no paper,' replied the driver, turning away. 'If he had had a paper, or if he had been brought to us by the authorities, I don't say. But he came alone, and on foot. We do as others do.'

" 'On foot, did you say? How clever of him! It was warm then, while now we have a "norther"—you just figure that out. The man will freeze now. Are the assessor and the doctor going to walk, do you think? Won't you have to take them back and foward? . . . And you, gentlemen, what do you mean by rousing the crowd for no cause whatever in the middle of the night?'

" 'He had a fire,' put in our driver by way of exculpation.

" 'For no cause, do you say?' I retorted, feeling the ground slipping from under my feet. 'A man is freezing to death,—isn't that cause enough? We must help.'

" 'Help? And how? If God preserves him he will come, and we will take him in. You, Timothy, why did not you pick him up?' he turned again to our driver.

" 'Where could I have put him? There were three of us as it was . . . What's to be done now?'

" 'He had a fire, so the Lord, maybe, will save him.'

" 'Stay!' I cried in anguish. 'This will never do! The man may be dying now, this minute . . . Just listen to this!'

"For a moment there was silence in the room. We could feel the shocks and hear the blows: it was as though something were being pounded in a mortar. And at times imagination added groans, in reality probably the noise of the tree tops in the forest, or the crashing of the ice.

"Here and there a sigh was heard in the hut. Nevertheless, the door kept opening and closing: the men were dropping out one at a time.

" 'The Lord save us!' whispered one voice, and another added roughly:

" 'We are freezing ourselves. Never a winter but one of our drivers drops dead at one or other of the nearest stations, and more often two. The relays around here are fierce.'

" 'Three years ago, Fedko froze dead in this same forest.'

" 'Last year it was a woman with a boy.'

" 'And was not my grandson frozen?' came an angry voice out of the crowd.

" 'In this wind the mail does not travel,' remarked our driver.

The door creaked more and more frequently. The crowd was dispersing.

" 'Wait!' I cried, desperately. 'Won't money do it? Ten roubles! Who will go with me?'

"At this moment my glance fell on Ignatovitch's face. He sat on the bench by the table, speechless, deathly pale, and my heart ached for him. My voice broke. I remember that the *starosta* just then looked at me with sympathy and moved uneasily.

" 'Twenty! Thirty! All we have!' I cried, almost panting with excitement.

" 'Stop, all of you,' the *starosta* commanded with his loud, rough voice, which instantly arrested the men. 'Don't go, any of you! You heard? They are offering money for what we ought to do regardless of money. It is true that it is a sin we are committing. We should remember God. Well, whose turn is it to go? The old ones—speak up!'

"There was a recoil from the door to the middle of the room. The *starosta* stood at my side, and I never took my eyes off him. He was a middle-aged man, large of build, of swarthy complexion, with rather coarse, —yet pleasing—features and deep-set black eyes that had a determined and somewhat care-worn expression.

" 'Oh, man!' he turned to me gruffly, while the crowd started that clamourous hubbub which invariably precedes the discussion of a subject of common interest at a meeting. 'You have a fine conscience, but poor wit. It might have been better had you not mentioned money. I was just going to order a rescue. Now they will have to proceed according to their rules.'

"They did; and a painfully long and complicated proceeding it was. You must know that these post-station drivers (*yamstchiks*) here along the Lena form peculiarly-organized station communities, survivals of bygone ages. Land they have none, only their wages. The unit of distribution and assessment 'per soul' is 'a pair of horses.' A 'soul' means a part of a horse with a corresponding part of the salary. All the community's receipts and all the dues it pays are distributed or assessed on this basis. Now my money—casual money at that—had to pass through this distributing machinery; it was to be divided among all the members of the community, the *mir*, which had to appoint those whose turn it was to serve.

"The discussion turned into disputes. The fare by the verst, the parts of horses, old accounts, service by turn, the hauling of fire-wood, carrying the mail and officials, the orphans' share, the feeding of prisoners,—all these items were drawn into the calculation and were discussed hotly and circumstantially. Several times, I attempted to stop the disputants by sorrowfully reminding them that a man might be perishing while they were squabbling here, but the nan nearest to me replied with inflexible eriousness:

“ ‘Can’t be helped. Don’t meddle. This s *mir* business. If you interfere, you’ll nake it worse.’

“The bickering continued. The men did iot seem near reaching a decision. The minous rumble outdoors went on.

“The *starosta* at length seemed to catch ny impatience and intervened. He naturlly understood the intricacies of the assessnent machinery which was so noisily workng before our eyes, better than I did, and saw hat not a little time would still elapse before t accomplished its task to the general satisaction. He stepped forward, with one loud all stopped the tumult of voices, then urned to the ikon in the corner and impressively crossed himself with a broad gesture. A few hands in the crowd instincively were lifted to form the sacred sign. The evil night was beginning to affect even hese tough nerves . . .

“ ‘Brothers,’ he began, ‘this won’t do . . . n the sight of God and Christ’s holy Mother. I’m out of it: no money for me. I am going anyhow, turn or no turn . . . If only the Lord will help. Put away your money, sir. If anything, light a taper in hurch.’

“There was a moment’s silence. Then one of the men, who but a minute ago had been hotly disputing about some question of “turn,’ was the first to speak with quiet sympathy:

“ ‘Well, may God help you . . . If so, it is your own wish . . .’

“Others followed:

“ ‘It’s your lookout.’

“ ‘An extra job,—of your own free will. . . . After all, a man’s soul is worth more than money . . .’

“ ‘Still, it’s pretty nasty out . . . Heaven help us! The mail is held, that’s certain.’

“ ‘Bother the money! . . . Our Lady protect thee, Sofron Semionovitch!’

“I looked with unreasoning relief toward the place where Ignatovitch had been sitting. It seemed to me that in the *starosta’s* generous offer, and in the way it was received, there lay a solution of the affair which somehow took the blame from us as well. But Ignatovitch was no longer there.

“Soon the room was empty, except for the host, two or three tarrying men, and myself. My companion was nowhere to be seen. The men said that he had gone out, dressed for the road, before the breaking up of the meeting.

“A dire presentiment gripped my heart. I recalled his pale face while the debates were going on. At first it wore its habitual misanthropical expression with the addition of a certain spiteful contempt for himself and others. But at the last moment I could recall only one of profound, hopeless sadness. That was the moment, when I offered money and the *yamstchiks* began clamouring.

“I stepped out on the porch, looked for him, called him, adding, in case he did hear, that it was all arranged, that I was going at once to the forest after the derelict. But there was no answer, the lights were going out in the windows of the station cabins, the wind kept up its threnody; at times the walls of the smaller mild huts cracked aloud, while from a distance came the groanlike noise of bursting ice.

“ ‘Calling your companion?’ asked one of the men as he was passing the house. ‘Why, he went to another cabin to sleep, it was so noisy here.’

“Presently the *starosta’s* low broad sleigh, drawn by a good pair of horses, held up before the cabin and he alighted from it, muffled up to the ears in furs, his hands hidden in enormous mittens, and approached me.

“ ‘What is it?’ he inquired. ‘Anything new?’

“ ‘Quick, quick, for God’s sake!’ I cried, seized with a nervous tremour. I suddenly felt to a certainty that I should find Ignatovitch somewhere on the road.

“ ‘Well, no,’ he said. ‘Wait a bit. You can’t go like this. Your clothes are not fit to face this wind. Here, I’ve brought you something. Put it on.’

“He insisted that I should get into the furs he brought me. It was nearly daybreak when we started, taking with us more clothes in case of need.

“The wind was violent, and so cold that it burned you. A full moon rode high up in the sky. Below, a so-called ‘ground storm’ was racing along. Do you know what that is? It is this: the wind lifts the dry snow from the ground and carries it straight in your face, in one even, continuous sheet. It is not a snow-storm, but worse than any snow-storm. In such weather as that all traffic ceases. In confronting it, we certainly took risks: that ride cost me two fingers which had to be amputated later on.”

“Did you find your man?” I asked impatiently, seeing that Sokolsky did not seem inclined to continue his narrative.

“We did,” he replied in a flat, toneless sort of voice. “It was a grey morning;

the wind had abated; a chill mist was settling down . . . He had a fire, but it had gone out long before . . . He had probably fallen asleep. However, his eyes were open and there was frost on the pupils."

"And your companion? Had he really stayed behind in the station village?"

Sokolsky looked at me with dull, lustreless eyes.

"I was deeply convinced," he said, "that he had taken the road to the forest, and therefore I kept shouting and calling all the way and peering into the darkness of the wood. The *starosta* endeavoured to calm me. For one thing, he could not conceive that a man should gratuitously have gone to certain death; then there was but one road from the station or village, broad, with guide poles planted all along, excluding the possibility of losing one's way, especially on a moonlit night.

"When we returned with our sad burden, well wrapped in furs, lying in the bottom of the sleigh, it was already morning. The wind had quieted and the cold had suddenly abated. Then the sun rose. There were no traces anywhere."

"So you were mistaken after all?"

"We reached the station. He was not there."

Sokolsky was silent after this, and an expression of great tenderness softened his somewhat rugged features.

"He was unpractical and helpless as a child," he spoke again. "He never could find his way. He left the cabin intending to rescue the man, but . . . started in the opposite direction." Sokolsky turned quite round to me. "Can you imagine such a thing? Started in the opposite direction and kept straight on! Now the road on that side is just as broad as on the other and also soon enters the forest. And next day, in the more sheltered places of the dense growth, tracks were discovered. They made a straight trail, never turning right or left. He had walked a very long distance, without swerving until . . ."

Sokolsky was silent again, and kept looking aside for a quite a while.

"Did he hope to save that unknown man? . . . I don't think so. He went, just as he was, taking nothing but tinder and steel, which, however, he hardly would have known how to handle. A perfect child, I tell you! He simply could not stand it any longer . . . And another thing . . . It occurs to me at times that he wanted to chastise in his own person the vile human nature which allows conscience to freeze to death if the body's temperature sinks 2°. In him the romantic idealist sentenced and executed the materialist."

Another silence.

"You said, I believe, 'the vile human nature'?" I began after an interval.

He looked round at me, as if somewhat astonished.

"Oh, yes. I see . . . I don't know, I don't know! I simply know nothing. Or, I know just one thing: that often those perish who should not, while we remain, who . . ."

He ended the sentence with a wave of his hand and all the rest of the time we rode in silence, until, from behind a declivity, appeared slight clouds of smoke, belonging to the station at which we were to part company. Sokolsky was in a great hurry to rejoin his prospecting party and hastened ahead, while we were compelled to travel more slowly.

VII

Some two days later, we were traversing a dense wood, when our driver, a young lad, indeed, a mere boy, showed me, pointing with his whip, a large stone cross, erected in the thickest of it, at the side of the road, and said:

"A man froze to death here, indeed two men. Sokolsky put up the cross,—the prospector, maybe you know him? He passed this way yesterday. See, those are his tracks."

And, really, there, on the deep snow, illumined by some stray sunbeams which had found their way through the dense boughs, was, plainly to be seen, a man's large track, leading to the cross and back.

"He never passes the place," went on the lad, turning round on his narrow driver's seat and smiling, "but he alights, stands there quite some time, then goes back, and drives on. He does not cross himself, but you can see that he prays, sometimes even with tears. Queer, but a good sort."

He flicked his horse and added, thoughtfully:

"Must have been friends of his."

ON AN UNWORTHY MAGISTRATE

Fortune did not willingly give you advancement, but to show that her omnipotence reaches even as low as you. GREEK ANTHOLOGY.

Christ in Flanders

By HONORÉ DE BALZAC

de Balzac

AT A DIMLY remote period in the history of Brabant, communication between the Island of Cadzand and the Flemish coast was kept up by a boat which carried passengers from one shore to the other. Middelburg, the chief town in the island, destined to become so famous in the annals of Protestantism, at that time only numbered some two or three hundred hearths; and the prosperous town of Ostend was an obscure haven, a straggling village where pirates dwelt in security among the fishermen and the few poor merchants who lived in the place.

But though the town of Ostend consisted altogether of some score of houses and three hundred cottages, huts or hovels built of the driftwood of wrecked vessels, it nevertheless rejoiced in the possession of a governor, a garrison, a forked gibbet, a convent, and a burgomaster, in short, in all the institutions of an advanced civilization.

Who reigned over Brabant and Flanders in those days? On this point tradition is mute. Let us confess at once that this tale savours strongly of the marvelous, the mysterious, and the vague; elements which Flemish narrators have infused into a story retailed so often to gatherings of workers on winter evenings, that the versions vary widely in poetic merit and congruity of detail. It has been told by every generation, handed down by grandames at the fireside, narrated night and day, and the chronicle has changed its complexion somewhat in every age. Like some great building that has suffered many modifications of successive generations of architects, some sombre, weather-beaten pile, the delight of a poet, the story would drive the commentator and the industrious winnower of words, facts, and dates to despair. The narrator believes in it, as all superstitious minds in Flanders likewise believe; and is not a whit wiser nor more credulous than his audience. But as it would be impossible to make a harmony of all the different renderings, here are the outlines of the story; stripped, it may be, of its picturesque quaintness, but with all its bold disregard of historical truth, and its moral teaching approved by religion—a myth, the blossom of imaginative fancy; an allegory that the wise may interpret to suit themselves. To each his own pasturage, and the task of separating the tares from the wheat.

The boat that served to carry passengers from the Island of Cadzand to Ostend was upon the point of departure; but before the skipper loosed the chain that secured the shallop to the little jetty, where people embarked, he blew a horn several times, to warn late lingerers, this being his last journey that day. Night was falling. It was scarcely possible to see the coast of Flanders by the dying fires of the sunset, or to make out upon the hither shore any forms of belated passengers hurrying along the wall of the dykes that surrounded the open country, or among the tall reeds of the marshes. The boat was full.

"What are you waiting for? Let us put off!" they cried.

Just at that moment a man appeared a few paces from the jetty, to the surprise of the skipper, who had heard no sound of footsteps. The traveler seemed to have sprung up from the earth, like a peasant who had laid himself down on the ground to wait till the boat should start, and had slept till the sound of the horn awakened him. Was he a thief? or someone belonging to the custom-house or the police?

As soon as the man appeared on the jetty to which the boat was moored, seven persons who were standing in the stern of the shallop hastened to sit down on the benches, so as to leave no room for the newcomer. It was the swift and instinctive working of the aristocratic spirit, an impulse of exclusiveness that comes from the rich man's heart. Four of the seven personages belonged to the most aristocratic families in Flanders. First among them was a young knight with two beautiful greyhounds; his long hair flowed from beneath a jeweled cap; he clanked his gilded spurs, curled the ends of his mustache from time to time with a swaggering grace, and looked around disdainfully on the rest of the crew. A high-born damsel, with a falcon on her wrist, spoke only with her mother or with a churchman of high rank, who was evidently a relation. All these persons made a great deal of noise, and talked among themselves as though there were no one else in the boat; yet close beside them sat a man of great importance in the district, a stout burgher of Bruges, wrapped about with a vast cloak. His servant, armed to the teeth, had set down a couple of bags filled with gold at his side. Next to the burgher came a man of learning, a doctor of the University of Louvain, who was traveling with his clerk. This little group of folk, who looked contemptuously at each other, was separated from the passengers in the forward part of the boat by the bench of rowers.

The belated traveler glanced about him as he stepped on board, saw that there was no room for him in the stern, and went to the bows in quest of a seat. They were all poor people there. At first sight of the bare-headed man in the brown camlet coat and trunk-hose, and plain stiff linen collar, they noticed that he wore no ornaments, carried no cap nor bonnet in his hand, and had neither sword nor purse at his girdle, and one and all took him for a burgomaster sure of his authority, a worthy and kindly burgomaster like so many a Fleming of old times, whose homely features and characters have been immortalized by Flemish painters. The poorer passengers, therefore, received him with demonstrations of respect that provoked scornful tittering at the other end of the boat. An old soldier, inured to toil and hardship, gave up his place on the bench to the newcomer, and seated himself on the edge of the vessel, keeping his balance by planting his feet against one of those transverse beams, like the backbone of a fish, that hold the planks of a boat together. A young mother, who bore her baby in her arms, and seemed to belong to the working class in Ostend, moved aside to make room for the stranger. There was neither servility nor scorn in her manner of doing this; it was a simple sign of the good-will by which the poor, who know by long experience the value of a service and the warmth that fellowship brings, give expression to the open-heartedness and the natural impulses of their souls; so artlessly do they reveal their good qualities and their defects. The stranger thanked her by a gesture full of gracious dignity, and took his place between the young mother and the old soldier. Immediately behind him sat a peasant and his son, a boy ten years of age. A beggar woman, old, wrinkled, and clad in rags, was crouching, with her almost empty wallet, on a great coil of rope that lay in the prow. One of the rowers, an old sailor, who had known her in the days of her beauty and prosperity, had let her come in "for the love of God," in the beautiful phrase that the common people use.

"Thank you kindly, Thomas," the old woman had said. "I will say two *Paters* and two *Aves* for you in my prayers tonight."

The skipper blew his horn for the last time, looked along the silent shore, flung off the chain, ran along the side of the boat, and took up his position at the helm. He looked at the sky, and as soon as they were out in the open sea, he shouted to the men: "Pull away, pull with all your might! The sea is smiling at a squall, the witch! I can feel the swell by the way the rudder works, and the storm in my wounds."

The nautical phrases, unintelligible to ears unused to the sound of the sea, seemed to put fresh energy into the oars; they kept time together, the rhythm of the movement was still even and steady, but quite unlike the previous manner of rowing; it was as if a cantering horse had broken into a gallop. The gay company seated in the stern amused themselves by watching the brawny arms, the tanned faces, and sparkling eyes of the rowers, the play of the tense muscles, the physical and mental forces that were being exerted to bring them for a trifling toll across the channel. So far from pitying the rowers' distress, they pointed out the men's faces to each other, and laughed at the grotesque expressions on the faces of the crew who were straining every muscle; but in the fore part of the boat the soldier, the peasant, and the old beggar woman watched the sailors with the sympathy naturally felt by toilers who live by the sweat of their brow and know the rough struggle, the strenuous excitement of effort. These folk, moreover, whose lives were spent in the open air, had all seen the warnings of danger in the sky, and their faces were grave. The young mother rocked her child, singing an old hymn of the Church for a lullaby.

"If we ever get there at all," the soldier remarked to the peasant, "it will be because the Almighty is bent on keeping us alive."

"Ah! He is the Master," said the old woman, "but I think it will be His good pleasure to take us to Himself. Just look at that light down there . . . " and she nodded her head as she spoke towards the sunset.

Streaks of fiery red glared from behind the masses of crimson-flushed brown cloud that seemed about to unloose a furious gale. There was a smothered murmur of the sea, a moaning sound that seemed to come from the depths, a low warning growl, such as a dog gives when he only means mischief as yet. After all, Ostend was not far away. Perhaps painting, like poetry, could not prolong the existence of the picture presented by sea and sky at that moment beyond the time of its actual duration. Art demands vehement contrasts, wherefore artists usually seek out Nature's most striking effects, doubtless because they despair of rendering the great and glorious charm of her daily moods; yet the human soul is often stirred as deeply by her calm as by her emotion, and by silence as by storm.

For a moment no one spoke on board the boat. Everyone watched that sea and sky, either with some presentiment of danger, or because they felt the influence of the religious melancholy that takes possession of nearly all of us at the close of the day, the hour of prayer, when all nature is hushed save for the voices of the bells. The sea gleamed pale and wan, but ts hues changed, and the surface took all he colours of steel. The sky was almost overspread with livid gray, but down in the west there were long narrow bars like streaks of blood; while lines of bright light in the eastern sky, sharp and clean as if drawn by he tip of a brush, were separated by folds of cloud, like the wrinkles on an old man's brow. The whole scene made a background of ashen grays and half-tints, in strong ontrast to the bale-fires of the sunset. f written language might borrow of spoken anguage some of the bold figures of speech nvented by the people, it might be said with the soldier that "the weather had been routed," or, as the peasant would say, "the sky glowered like an executioner." Suddenly a wind arose from the quarter of the sunset, and the skipper, who never took his eyes off the sea, saw the swell on the horizon line, and cried——

"Stop rowing!"

The sailors stopped immediately, and let their oars lie on the water.

"The skipper is right," said Thomas coolly. A great wave caught up the boat, carried it high on its crest, only to plunge it, as it were, into the trough of the sea that seemed to yawn for them. At this mighty upheaval, this sudden outbreak of the wrath of the sea, the company in the stern turned pale, and sent up a terrible cry.

"We are lost!"

"Oh, not yet!" said the skipper calmly.

As he spoke, the clouds immediately above their heads were torn asunder by the vehemence of the wind. The gray mass was rent and scattered east and west with ominous speed, a dim uncertain light from the rift in the sky fell full upon the boat, and the travelers beheld each other's faces. All of them, the noble and the wealthy, the sailors and the poor passengers alike, were amazed for a moment by the appearance of the last comer. His golden hair, parted upon his calm, serene forehead, fell in thick curls about his shoulders; and his face, sublime in its sweetness and radiant with divine love, stood out against the surrounding gloom. He had no contempt for death; he knew that he should not die. But if at the first the company in the stern forgot for a moment the implacable fury of the storm that threatened their lives, selfishness and their habits of life soon prevailed again.

"How lucky that stupid burgomaster is, not to see the risks we are all running! He is just like a dog, he will die without a struggle," said the doctor.

He had scarcely pronounced this highly judicious dictum when the storm unloosed all its legions. The wind blew from every quarter of the heavens, the boat spun round like a top, and the sea broke in.

"Oh! my poor child! My poor child! . . . Who will save my baby?" the mother cried in a heartrending voice.

"You yourself will save it," the stranger said.

The thrilling tones of that voice went to the young mother's heart and brought hope with them; she heard the gracious words through all the whistling of the wind and the shrieks of the passengers.

"Holy Virgin of Good Help, who art at Antwerp, I promise thee a thousand pounds of wax and a statue, if thou wilt rescue me from this!" cried the burgher, kneeling upon his bags of gold.

"The Virgin is no more at Antwerp than she is here," was the doctor's comment on this appeal.

"She is in heaven," said a voice that seemed to come from the sea.

"Who said that?"

" 'Tis the Devil!" exclaimed the servant. "He is scoffing at the Virgin of Antwerp."

"Let us have no more of your Holy Virgin at present," the skipper cried to the passengers. "Put your hands to the scoops and bale the water out of the boat.—And the rest of you," he went on, addressing the sailors, "pull with all your might! Now is the time; in the name of the Devil who is leaving you in this world, be your own Providence! Everyone knows that the channel is fearfully dangerous; I have been to and fro across it these thirty years. Am I facing a storm for the first time tonight?"

He stood at the helm, and looked, as before, at his boat and at the sea and sky in turn.

"The skipper always laughs at everything," muttered Thomas.

"Will God leave us to perish along with those wretched creatures?" asked the haughty damsel of the handsome cavalier.

"No, no, noble maiden . . . Listen!" and he caught her by the waist and said in her ear, "I can swim; say nothing about it! I will hold you by your fair hair and bring you safely to the shore; but I can save only you."

The girl looked at her aged mother. The lady was on her knees entreating absolution of the Bishop, who did not heed her. In the beautiful eyes the knight read a vague feeling of filial piety, and spoke in a smothered voice.

"Submit yourself to the will of God. If it is His pleasure to take your mother to Himself, it will doubtless be for her happiness—in the other world," he added, and his voice dropped still lower. "And for ours in this," he thought within himself.

The Dame of Rupelmonde was lady of seven fiefs beside the barony of Gâvres.

The girl felt the longing for life in her heart, and for love that spoke through the handsome adventurer, a young miscreant who haunted churches in search of a prize, an heiress to marry, or ready money. The Bishop bestowed his benison on the waves, and bade them be calm; it was all that he could do. He thought of his mistress, and of the delicate feast with which she would welcome him; perhaps at that very moment she was bathing, perfuming herself, robing herself in velvet, fastening her necklace and her jeweled clasps, and the perverse Bishop was so far from thinking of the power of Holy Church, of his duty to comfort Christians and exhort them to trust in God, that worldly regrets and lovers' sighs mingled with the holy words of the breviary. By the dim light that shone on the pale faces of the company, it was possible to see their differing expressions as the boat was lifted high in air by a wave, to be cast back into the dark depths; the shallop quivered like a fragile leaf, the plaything of the north wind in the autumn; the hull creaked, it seemed ready to go to pieces. Fearful shrieks went up, followed by an awful silence.

There was a strange difference between the behaviour of the folk in the bows and that of the rich or great people at the other end of the boat. The young mother clasped her infant tightly to her breast every time a great wave threatened to engulf the fragile vessel; but she clung to the hope that the stranger's words had set in her heart. Each time that her eyes turned to his face she drew fresh faith at the sight, the strong faith of a helpless woman, a mother's faith. She lived by that divine promise, the loving words from his lips; the simple creature waited trustingly for them to be fulfilled, and scarcely feared the danger any longer.

The soldier, holding fast to the vessel's side, never took his eyes off the strange visitor. He copied on his own rough and swarthy features the imperturbability of the other's face, applying to this task the whole strength of a will and intelligence but little corrupted in the course of a life of mechanical and passive obedience. So emulous was he of a calm and tranquil courage greater than his own, that at last, perhaps unconsciously, something of that mysterious nature passed into his own soul. His admiration became an instinctive zeal for this man, a boundless love for and belief in him, such a love as soldiers feel for their leader when he has the power of swaying other men, when the halo of victories surrounds him, and the magical fascination of genius is felt in all that he does. The poor outcast was murmuring to herself——

"Ah! miserable wretch that I am! Have I not suffered enough to expiate the sins of my youth? Ah! wretched woman, why did you lead the gay life of a frivolous French woman? why did you devour the goods of God with churchmen, the substance of the poor with extortioners and fleecers of the poor? Oh! I have sinned indeed!—Oh, my God! my God! let me finish my time in hell here in this world of misery."

And again she cried, "Holy Virgin, Mother of God, have pity upon me!"

"Be comforted, mother. God is not a Lombard usurer. I may have killed people good and bad at random in my time, but I am not afraid of the resurrection."

"Ah! master lancepesade, how happy those fair ladies are, to be so near to a bishop, a holy man! They will get absolution for their sins," said the old woman. "Oh! if I could only hear a priest say to me, 'Thy sins are forgiven!' I should believe it then."

The stranger turned towards her, and the goodness in his face made her tremble.

"Have faith," he said, "and you will be saved."

"May God reward you, good sir," she answered. "If what you say is true, I will go on pilgrimage barefooted to Our Lady of Loretto to pray to her for you and for me."

The two peasants, father and son, were ilent, patient, and submissive to the will of God, like folk whose wont it is to fall in nstinctively with the ways of Nature like attle. At the one end of the boat stood iches, pride, learning, debauchery, and rime—human society, such as art and hought and education and worldly interests nd laws have made it; and at this end there vas terror and wailing, innumerable different impulses all repressed by hideous doubts —at this end, and at this only, the agony of ear.

Above all these human lives stood a strong nan, the skipper; no doubts assailed him, he chief, the king, the fatalist among them. Ie was trusting in himself rather than in 'rovidence, crying, "Bale away!" instead f "Holy Virgin," defying the storm, in fact, nd struggling with the sea like a wrestler.

But the helpless poor at the other end of he wherry! The mother rocking on her osom the little one who smiled at the storm, he woman once so frivolous and gay, and ow tormented with bitter remorse; the old oldier covered with scars, a mutilated life he sole reward of his unflagging loyalty and aithfulness. This veteran could scarcely ount on a morsel of bread soaked in tears keep the life in him, yet he was always eady to laugh, and went his way merrily, appy when he could drown his glory in the epths of a pot of beer, or could tell tales of the wars to the children who admired him, leaving his future with a light heart in the hands of God. Lastly, there were the two peasants, used to hardships and toil, labour incarnate, the labour by which the world lives. These simple folk were indifferent to thought and its treasures, ready to sink them all in a belief; and their faith was but so much the more vigourous because they had never disputed about it nor analyzed it. Such a nature is a virgin soil, conscience has not been tampered with, feeling is deep and strong; repentance, trouble, love, and work have developed, purified, concentrated, and increased their force of will a hundred times, the will—the one thing in man that resembles what learned doctors call the Soul.

The boat, guided by the well-nigh miraculous skill of the steersman, came almost within sight of Ostend, when, not fifty paces from the shore, she was suddenly struck by a heavy sea and capsized. The stranger with the light about his head spoke to this little world of drowning creatures——

"Those who have faith shall be saved; let them follow me!"

He stood upright, and walked with a firm step upon the waves. The young mother at once took her child in her arms, and followed at his side across the sea. The soldier too sprang up, saying in his homely fashion, "Ah! *nom d'un pipe!* I would follow *you* to the Devil"; and without seeming astonished by it, he walked on the water. The old wornout sinner, believing in the omnipotence of God, also followed the stranger.

The two peasants said to each other, "If they are walking on the sea, why should we not do as they do?" and they also arose and hastened after the others. Thomas tried to follow, but his faith tottered; he sank in the sea more than once, and rose again, but the third time he also walked on the sea. The bold steersman clung like a remora to the wreck of his boat. The miser had had faith, and had risen to go, but he tried to take his gold with him, and it was his gold that dragged him down to the bottom. The learned man had scoffed at the charlatan and at the fools who listened to him; and when he heard the mysterious stranger propose to the passengers that they should walk on the waves, he began to laugh, and the ocean swallowed him. The girl was dragged down into the depths by her lover. The Bishop and the older lady went to the bottom, heavily laden with sins, it may be, but still more heavily laden with incredulity and confidence in idols, weighted down by devotion into which alms-deeds and true religion entered but little.

The faithful flock, who walked with a firm step high and dry above the surge, heard all about them the dreadful whistling of the blast; great billows broke across their path, but an irresistible force cleft a way for them through the sea. These believing ones saw through the spray a dim speck of light flickering in the window of a fisherman's hut on the shore, and each one, as he pushed on bravely towards the light, seemed to hear the voice of his fellow crying, "Courage!" through all the roaring of the surf; yet no one had spoken a word—so absorbed was each by his own peril. In this way they reached the shore.

When they were all seated near the fisherman's fire, they looked round in vain for their guide with the light about him. The sea washed up the steersman at the base of the cliff on which the cottage stood; he was clinging with might and main to the plank as a sailor can cling when death stares him in the face; the MAN went down and rescued the almost exhausted seaman; then he said, as he held out a succouring hand above the man's head——

"Good, for this once; but do not try it again; the example would be too bad."

He took the skipper on his shoulders, and carried him to the fisherman's door, knocked for admittance for the exhausted man; then, when the door of the humble refuge opened, the Saviour disappeared.

The Convent of Mercy was built for sailors on this spot, where for long afterwards (so it was said) the footprints of Jesus Christ could be seen in the sand; but in 1793, at the time of the French invasion, the monks carried away this precious relic, that bore witness to the Saviour's last visit to earth.

There at the convent I found myself shortly after the Revolution of 1830. I was weary of life. If you had asked me the reason of my despair, I should have found it almost impossible to give it, so languid had grown the soul that was melted within me. The west wind had slackened the springs of my intelligence. A cold, gray light poured down from the heavens, and the murky clouds that passed overhead gave a boding look to the land; all these things, together with the immensity of the sea, said to me, "Die to-day or die to-morrow, still must we not die?" And then—. I wandered on, musing on the doubtful future, on my blighted hopes. Gnawed by these gloomy thoughts, I turned mechanically into the convent church, with the gray towers that loomed like ghosts through the sea mists. I looked round with no kindling of the imagination at the forest of columns, at the slender arches set aloft upon the leafy capitals, a delicate labyrinth of sculpture. I walked with careless eyes along the side aisles that opened out before me like vast portals, ever turning upon their hinges. It was scarcely possible to see, by the dim light of the autumn day, the sculptured groinings of the roof, the delicate and clean-cut lines of the moldings of the graceful pointed arches. The organ pipes were mute. There was no sound save the noise of my own footsteps to awaken the mournful echoes lurking in the dark chapels. I sat down at the base of one of the four pillars that supported the tower, near the choir. Thence I could see the whole of the building. I gazed, and no ideas connected with it rose in my mind. I saw without seeing the mighty maze of pillars, the great rose windows that hung like a network suspended as by a miracle in air above the vast doorways. I saw the doors at the end of the side aisles, the aerial galleries, the stained glass windows framed in archways, divided by slender columns, fretted into flower forms and trefoil by fine filigree work of carved stone. A dome of glass at the end of the choir sparkled as if it had been built of precious stones set cunningly. In contrast to the roof with its alternating spaces of whiteness and colour, the two aisles lay to right and left in shadow so deep that the faint gray outlines of their hundred shafts were scarcely visible in the gloom. I gazed at the marvelous arcades, the scroll-work, the garlands, the curving lines, and arabesques interwoven and interlaced, and strangely lighted, until by sheer dint of gazing my perceptions became confused, and I stood upon the borderland between illusion and reality, taken in the snare set for the eyes, and almost light-headed by reason of the multitudinous changes of the shapes about me.

Imperceptibly a mist gathered about the carven stonework, and I beheld it through a haze of fine golden dust like the motes that hover in the bars of sunlight slanting through the air of a chamber. Suddenly the stone lacework of the rose windows gleamed through this vapour that had made all forms so shadowy. Every molding, the edges of every carving, the least detail of the sculpture was dipped in silver. The sunlight kindled fires in the stained windows, their rich colours sent out glowing sparks of light. The shafts began to tremble, the capitals were gently shaken. A light shudder as of delight ran through the building, the stones were loosened in their setting, the wall-spaces swayed with graceful caution. Here and there a ponderous pier moved as solemnly as a dowager when she condescends to complete a quadrille at the close of a ball. A few slender and graceful columns, their heads adorned with wreaths of trefoil, began to laugh and dance here and there. Some of the pointed arches dashed at the tall lancet windows, who, like ladies of the Middle Ages, wore the armorial bearings of their houses emblazoned on their golden robes. The dance of the mitered arcades with the slender windows became like a fray at a tourney.

In another moment every stone in the church vibrated, without leaving its place; for the organ-pipes spoke, and I heard divine music mingling with the songs of angels, an unearthly harmony, accompanied by the deep notes of the bells, that boomed as the giant towers rocked and swayed on their square bases. This strange Sabbath seemed to me the most natural thing in the world; and I, who had seen Charles X hurled from his throne, was no longer amazed by anything. Nay, I myself was gently swaying with a see-saw movement that influenced my nerves pleasurably in a manner of which it is impossible to give any idea. Yet in the midst of this heated riot, the cathedral choir felt cold as if it were a winter day, and I became aware of a multitude of women, robed in white, silent, and impassive, sitting there. The sweet incense smoke that arose from the censers was grateful to my soul. The tall wax candles flickered. The lectern, gay as a chanter undone by the treachery of wine, was skipping about like a peal of Chinese bells.

Then I knew that the whole cathedral was whirling round so fast that everything appeared to be undisturbed. The colossal Figure on the crucifix above the altar smiled upon me with a mingled malice and benevolence that frightened me; I turned my eyes away, and marveled at the bluish vapour that slid across the pillars, lending to them an indescribable charm. Then some graceful women's forms began to stir on the friezes. The cherubs who upheld the heavy columns shook out their wings. I felt myself uplifted by some divine power that steeped me in infinite joy, in a sweet and languid rapture. I would have given my life, I think, to have prolonged these phantasmagoria for a little, but suddenly a shrill voice clamored in my ears——

"Awake and follow me!"

A withered woman took my hand in hers; its icy coldness crept through every nerve. The bones of her face showed plainly through the sallow, almost olive-tinted wrinkles of the skin. The shrunken, ice-cold old woman wore a black robe, which she trailed in the dust, and at her throat there was something white, which I dared not examine. I could scarcely see her wan and colourless eyes, for they were fixed in a stare upon the heavens. She drew me after her along the aisles, leaving a trace of her presence in the ashes that she shook from her dress. Her bones rattled as she walked, like the bones of a skeleton; and as we went I heard behind me the tinkling of a little bell, a thin, sharp sound that rang through my head like the notes of a harmonica.

"Suffer!" she cried, "suffer! So it must be!"

We came out of the church; we went through the dirtiest streets of the town, till we came at last to a dingy dwelling, and she bade me enter in. She dragged me with her, calling to me in a harsh, tuneless voice like a cracked bell——

"Defend me! defend me!"

Together we went up a winding staircase. She knocked at a door in the darkness, and a mute, like some familiar of the Inquisition, opened to her. In another moment, we stood in a room hung with ancient, ragged tapestry, amid piles of old linen, crumpled muslin, and gilded brass.

"Behold the wealth that shall endure forever!" said she.

I shuddered with horror; for just then, by the light of a tall torch and two altar candles, I saw distinctly that this woman was fresh from the graveyard. She had no hair. I turned to fly. She raised her fleshless arm and encircled me with a band of iron set with spikes, and as she raised it a cry went up all about us, the cry of millions of voices—the shouting of the dead!

"It is my purpose to make thee happy forever," she said. "Thou art my son."

We were sitting before the hearth, the ashes lay cold upon it; the old shrunken woman grasped my hand so tightly in hers that I could not choose but stay. I looked fixedly at her, striving to read the story of her life from the things among which she was crouching. Had she indeed any life in her? It was a mystery. Yet I saw plainly that once she must have been young and beautiful; fair, with all the charm of simplicity, perfect as some Greek statue, with the brow of a vestal.

"Ah! ah!" I cried, "now I know thee! Miserable woman, why hast thou prostituted thyself? In the age of thy passions, in the time of thy prosperity, the grace and purity of thy youth were forgotten. Forgetful of thy heroic devotion, thy pure life, thy abundant faith, thou didst resign thy primitive power and thy spiritual supremacy for fleshly power. Thy linen vestments, thy couch of moss, the cell in the rock, bright with rays of the Light Divine, was forsaken; thou hast sparkled with diamonds, and shone with the glitter of luxury and pride. Then, grown bold and insolent, seizing and overturning all things in thy course like a courtesan eager for pleasure in her days of splendour, thou hast steeped thyself in blood like some queen stupefied by empery. Dost thou not remember to have been dull and heavy at times, and the sudden marvelous lucidity of other moments; as when Art emerges from an orgy? Oh! poet, painter, and singer, lover of splendid ceremonies and protector of the arts, was thy friendship for art perchance a caprice, that so thou shouldst sleep beneath magnificent canopies? Was there not a day when, in thy fantastic pride, though chastity and humility were prescribed to thee, thou hadst brought all things beneath thy feet, and set thy foot on the necks of princes; when earthly dominion, and wealth and the mind of man bore thy yoke? Exulting in the abasement of humanity, joying to witness the uttermost lengths to which man's folly would go, thou hast bidden thy lovers walk on all fours, and required of them their lands and wealth, nay, even their wives if they were worth aught to thee. Thou hast devoured millions of men without a cause; thou hast flung away lives like sand blown by the wind from west to east. Thou hast come down from the heights of thought to sit among the kings of men. Woman! instead of comforting men, thou hast tormented and afflicted them! Knowing that thou couldst ask and have, thou hast demanded —blood! A little flour surely should have contented thee, accustomed as thou hadst been to live on bread and to mingle water with thy wine. Unlike all others in all things, formerly thou wouldst bid thy lovers fast, and they obeyed. Why should thy fancies have led thee to require things impossible? Why, like a courtesan spoiled by her lovers, hast thou doted on follies, and left those undeceived who sought to explain and justify all thy errors? Then came the days of thy later passions, terrible like the love of a woman of forty years, with a fierce cry thou hast sought to clasp the whole universe in one last embrace—and thy universe recoiled from thee!

"Then old men succeeded to thy young lovers; decrepitude came to thy feet and made thee hideous. Yet, even then, men with the eagle power of vision said to thee in a glance, 'Thou shalt perish ingloriously, because thou hast fallen away, because thou hast broken the vows of thy maidenhood. The angel with peace written on her forehead, who should have shed light and joy along her path, has been a Messalina, delighting in the circus, in debauchery, and abuse of power. The days of thy virginity cannot return; henceforward thou shalt be subject to a master. Thy hour has come; the hand of death is upon thee. Thy heirs believe that thou art rich; they will kill thee and find nothing Yet try at least to fling away this raiment no longer in fashion; be once more as in the days of old!—Nay, thou art dead, and by thy own deed!

"Is not this thy story?" so I ended. "Decrepit, toothless, shivering crone, now forgotten, going thy ways without so much as a glance from passers-by! Why art thou still alive? What doest thou in that beggar's garb, uncomely and desired of none? Where are thy riches?—for what were they spent? Where are thy treasures?—what great deeds hast thou done?"

At this demand, the shriveled woman raised her bony form, flung off her rags, and grew tall and radiant, smiling as she broke forth from the dark chrysalid sheath. Then like a butterfly, this diaphanous creature emerged, fair and youthful, clothed in white linen. Her golden hair rippled over her shoulders, her eyes glowed, a bright mist hung about her, a ring of gold hovered above her head, she shook the flaming blade of a sword towards the spaces of heaven.

"See and believe!" she cried.

And suddenly I saw, afar off, many thousands of cathedrals like the one that I had just quitted; but these were covered with pictures and with frescoes, and I heard them echo with entrancing music. Myriads of human creatures flocked to these great buildings, swarming about them like ants on an ant-heap. Some were eager to rescue books from oblivion or to copy manuscripts, others were helping the poor, but nearly all were studying. Up above this countless multitude rose giant statues that they had erected in their midst, and by the gleams of a strange light from some luminary as powerful as the sun, I read the inscriptions on the bases of the statues—Science, History, Literature.

The light died out. Again I faced the young girl. Gradually she slipped into the dreary sheath, into the ragged cerecloths, and became an aged woman again. Her familiar brought her a little dust, and she stirred it into the ashes of her chafing-dish, for the weather was cold and stormy; and then he lighted for her, whose palaces had been lit with thousands of wax-tapers, a little cresset, that she might see to read her prayers through the hours of night.

"There is no faith left in the earth! . . ." she said.

In such a perilous plight did I behold the fairest and the greatest, the truest and most life-giving of all Powers.

"Wake up, sir, the doors are just about to be shut," said a hoarse voice. I turned and beheld the beadle's ugly countenance; the man was shaking me by the arm, and the cathedral lay wrapped in shadows as a man is wrapped in his cloak.

"Belief," I said to myself, "is Life! I have just witnessed the funeral of a monarchy; now we must defend the Church."

Love at Sea

By ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

WE ARE in love's land to-day;
Where shall we go?
Love, shall we start or stay,
Or sail or row?
There's many a wind and way
And never a May but May;
We are in love's hand to-day;
Where shall we go?

Our land-wind is the breath
Of sorrows kissed to death
And joys that were;
Our ballast is a rose;
Our way lies where God knows
And love knows where.
We are in love's hand to-day—

Our seamen are fledged Loves,
Our masts are bills of doves,
Our decks fine gold;
Our ropes are dead maids' hair,
Our stores are love-shafts fair
And manifold.
We are in love's land to-day—

Where shall we land you, sweet?
On fields of strange men's feet,
Or fields near home?
Or where the fire-flowers blow,
Or where the flowers of snow
Or flowers of foam?
We are in love's hand to-day—

Land me, she says, where love
Shows but one shaft, one dove,
One heart, one hand.
—A shore like that, my dear,
Lies where no man will steer,
No maiden land.

So They Say

HENRY FORD:	"I don't believe in dairy cows. They are the most inefficient creatures in the world. Someone will invent a way to make milk synthetically. It will be cheaper and better than the milk we have now."
KING NONA AMOAH III: *Chief of Fanti tribe of the Gold Coast (where the royal succession goes to the wife's nephew)*	"We worship the women."
PROF. J. B. FINLEY: *Graduate of Harvard, and University of Edinburgh; former professor at University of California*	"A master of arts or doctor of philosophy is now a boy whose parents have enough money to keep him in college until the professors are tired of looking at him."
ESTELLE TAYLOR DEMPSEY: *Wife of Champion Heavyweight Jack Dempsey*	"Jack is the most lovable man I have ever met."
A LARGE CAPABLE-LOOKING NEGRESS: *On park bench, beside dejected coloured man, arguing with a vociferous open-air philosopher*	"I ain' int'rested in men. Dey ain' got nothin' to do with me. I'ze only int'rested in dis one man I got on my han's."
HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK: *at Geneva, September 14*	"If mankind does not end war, war will end mankind."
M. PAUL PAINLEVÉ: *Premier of France*	"Liberty is not the right of leaving all to one's desires or caprices; it is the freedom to discipline one's self."
WALTER H. MCFARLAND: *on trial for bigamy, New York, Sept. 1*	"I have three wives. and I love 'em all."
GEN. RICHARD MULCAHY: *former Commander-in-Chief, Irish Free State, when showered with eggs and tomatoes in America*	"What's a mere bad egg or two between Irish?"
LEHMAN JOHNSON: *of Tennessee, concerning the evolution excitement*	"We have no business worrying in this country where we come from when all our attention should be directed toward where we are going to."
PRES. JAMES R. ANGELL: *in opening address at Yale University*	"To give the human spirit freedom, to make it more fully alive, is undoubtedly the great dominating purpose for which our colleges exist."
A SPIRITUALIST LEADER: *at the International Spiritualist Congress in Paris*	"It is a matter of training phantoms, which naturally manifest themselves in ectoplasmic form. We must endeavour to accustom phantoms to appear in public."
TERRY DUGGAN: *of Chicago, Volstead Law prisoner*	"They say I'm a terror. Sure I fought when I had to. When a guy steps off the base he is out. I ain't got round heels."
BISHOP IRVING P. JOHNSON: *Protestant Episcopal Church, of Colorado*	"So long as we continue to select our governors, legislators and judges because they have the same prejudices as ourselves, hell is just around the corner."

Mr. Dooley on Gifts

By
F. P. DUNNE

F. P. Dunne

THE approach of Christmas is heralded in Archey Road by many of the signs that are known to the less civilized and more prosperous parts of the city. The people look poorer, colder, and more hopeful than at other times. The bakeries assume an old-country appearance of gayety. The saloons are well filled. Also, if you have your eyes about you, you may catch a glimpse, now and then, through a frosted window-pane of a stunted Christmas tree, laden slenderly with glass balls and ropes of red popcorn, the work of painful hands after the children are abed. Mr. Dooley knew Christmas was coming by the calendar, the expiration of his quarterly license, and Mr. Hennessy coming in with a doll in his pocket and a rocking-chair under his arm.

"Prisints?" said the philosopher.

"Yis," said Mr. Hennessy. "I had to do it. I med up me mind this year that I wudden't buy anny Chris'mas prisints or take anny. I can't afford it. Times has been fearful ha-ard, an' a look iv pain comes over th' ol' woman's face whin I hold out fifty cints fr'm me salary on Saturdah night. I give it out that I didn't want anything, but they's so much scurryin' ar-round an' hidin' things whin I go in that I know they've got something f'r me. I cudden't stand it no longer, so I wint down-town tonight, down be Shekel an' Whooper's place, an' bought these things. This is a fine doll f'r th' money."

"It is," said Mr. Dooley, taking the doll and examining it with the eye of an art critic. "It closes its eyes—yis, an', bedad, it cries if ye punch it. They're makin' these things more like human bein's ivry year. An' does it say pap-pah an' mam-mah, I dinnaw?"

"No," said Mr. Hennessy, "th' pap-pah an' mam-mah dolls costs too much."

"Well," continued Mr. Dooley, "we can't have ivrything we want in this wurruld. If I had me way, I'd buy goold watches an' chains f'r ivrybody in th' r-road, an' a few iv th' good Germans. I feel that gin'rous. But 'tis no use. Ye can't give what ye want. Ivry little boy ixpects a pony at Chris'mas, an' ivry little girl a chain an' locket; an' ivry man thinks he's sure goin' to get th' goold-headed cane he's longed f'r since he come over. But they all fin'lly land on rockin'-horses an' dolls, an' suspindhers that r-run pink flowers into their shirts an' tattoo thim in summer. An' they conceal their grief Chris'mas mornin' an' thry to look pleasant with murdher in their hearts.

"Some wan has always give me a Chris'mas prisint, though no wan has anny r-right to. But no wan iver give me annything I cud wear or ate or dhrink or smoke or curl me hair with. I've had flasks iv whisky give me—me that have lashin's iv whisky at me elbow day an' night; an', whin I opined thim, blue an' yellow flames come out an' some iv th' stuff r-run over on th' flure, an' set fire to th' buildin'. I smoke th' best five-cint see-gar that money can buy; yet, whin a good friend iv mine wants to make me a prisint f'r Chris'mas, he goes to a harness shop an' buys a box iv see-gars with excelsior fillin's an' burlap wrappers, an', if I smoked wan an' lived, I'd be arristed f'r arson. I got a pair iv suspinders wanst fr'm a lady—niver mind her name—an' I wurruked hard that day; an' th' decorations moved back into me, an' I had to take thim out with pumice stone. I didn't lose th' taste iv th' paint f'r weeks an' weeks.

"Wan year I wanted a watch more thin annything in th' wurruld. I talked watches to ivry wan that I thought had designs on me. I made it a pint to ask me frinds what time iv night it was, an' thin say, 'Dear me, I ought to get a watch if I cud affoord it.' I used to tout people down to th' jooler's shop an' stand be th' window with a hungry look in th' eyes iv me, as much as to say, 'If I don't get a watch, I'll perish.' I talked watches an' thought watches an' dhreamed watches. Father Kelly rebuked me f'r bein' late f'r mass. 'How can I get there befure th' gospil, whin I don't know what time it is?' says I. 'Why don't ye luk at ye'er watch?' he sayd. 'I haven't none,' says I. Did he give me a watch? Faith, he did not. He sint me a box iv soap that made me smell like a coon goin' to a ball in a State Sthreet ca-ar. I got a necktie fr'm wan man; an', if I wore it to a meetin' iv th' Young Hebrews' Char'table Society, they'd've thrun me out. That man wanted me to be kilt. Another la-ad sint me a silk handkerchief that broke on me poor nose. Th' nearest I got to a watch was a hair chain that unraveled, an' made me look as if I'd been curryin' a Shetland pony. I niver got what I wanted, an I niver expect to. No wan does."

"I'll get ye what ye want," said Mr. Hennessy, "if ye'll tell me what it is, an' it don't cost too much.

"Will ye?" said Mr Dooley, eagerly.

"I will," said Mr Hennessy, "if 'tis within me means."

"Ye're jokin'," said Mr. Dooley.

"I'm not. I mane it."

"Do ye, honest?"

"I do so."

"Thin," said Mr. Dooley, "get me th' Audjitooroom. I've wanted that to play with f'r manny years."

And Mr. Hennessy went away with the rocking-chair under his arm, the doll in his pocket, and dumb anger in his heart.

The Coloured Knuckle-bones

(This poem, of the early sixteenth century, has come down in several versions. This one I am using is heard among the Afghan Waziris who live north of the western base of the Tukhti Suleyman. They drone rather than sing their poems, winding up the recitation with a sort of Pyrrhic war-dance, leaping over crossed swords and flourishing their cheray *daggers, which look exactly like butcher cleavers. The humour of this poem is gloriously unconscious. The Waziris take it with utter seriousness. I have seen them—huge, broad-shouldered, bearded men—shed tears at Timoor Khan's fate.*

Sheeps' knuckle-bones, squared into dice, are universal gambling implements in the Orient. They are also used unsquared, when the points may fall to left or right; and in this form Turkish children play many games with them—from which the Western youngster's game of jackstones is derived. ACHMED ABDULLAH.)

Timoor Khan, the Waziri, sings.
The sweet-voiced ancient sings.
On the subject of himself and the coloured knuckle-bones
He utters a few words.
Once I drew my cheray from a green belt studded with jewels.
And across my shoulders I threw a cloak of crimson velvet,
Lined with fur and tied with scented leather from Herat.
My followers were many.
Between the shadows of the shafts of their threatening lances
Was no room to put a foot.

My fifty stallions were slender.
Many were the women whom I caused to wear dark-blue in mourning
For their lovers whom I killed,
When my snake-like sword bit the heads from their shoulders.

Now the toss of the coloured knuckle-bones has brought me down.
I have fled my round stone tower-house, my rich encampment,
And the brilliant assemblies of the Waziris.
Now a pig-faced widow of the Sharaunees calls me "little uncle."
She has put a sickle into my hands and bid me cut the grass
For her seven spavined mares.

I have lost my tall boots, my fur cloak, gold stirrups and spurs.
The peasant's sandals of plaited palm-leaves cause my feet to swell.
All my possessions I gambled away for the sake of silly amusement.
This, then, is my story,
Which is the story of the coloured knuckle-bones.
But—what can I do?
Not even Allah can turn a gambler into a priest!
Not even Allah can turn a Moslem into a Hindu,
Nor cause him to wear the thread of Brahmin heathendom!

The Treasure of Franchard

By ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Robert Louis Stevenson

I

BY THE DYING MOUNTEBANK

THEY had sent for the doctor from Bourron before six. About eight some villagers came round for the performance, and were told how matters stood. It seemed a liberty for a mountebank to fall ill like real people, and they made off again in dudgeon. By ten Madame Tentaillon was gravely alarmed, and had sent down the street for Dr. Desprez.

The doctor was at work over his manuscripts in one corner of the little dining-room, and his wife was asleep over the fire in another, when the messenger arrived.

"Sapristi!" said the doctor, "you should have sent for me before. It was a case for hurry." And he followed the messenger as he was, in his slippers and skull-cap.

The inn was not thirty yards away, but the messenger did not stop there; he went in at one door and out by another into the court, and then led the way by a flight of steps beside the stable, to the loft where the mountebank lay sick. If Dr. Desprez were to live a thousand years, he would never forget his arrival in that room; for not only was the scene picturesque, but the moment made a date in his existence. We reckon our lives, I hardly know why, from the date of our first sorry appearance in society, as if from a first humiliation; for no actor can come upon the stage with a worse grace. Not to go further back, which would be judged too curious, there are subsequently many moving and decisive accidents in the lives of all, which would make as logical a period as this of birth. And here, for instance, Dr. Desprez, a man past forty, who had made what is called a failure in life, and was moreover married, found himself at a new point of departure when he opened the door of the loft above Tentaillon's stable.

It was a large place, lighted only by a single candle set upon the floor. The mountebank lay on his back upon a pallet; a large man, with a Quixotic nose inflamed with drinking. Madame Tentaillon stooped over him, applying a hot-water and mustard embrocation to his feet; and on a chair close by sat a little fellow of eleven or twelve, with his feet dangling. These three were the only occupants, except the shadows. But the shadows were a company in themselves; the extent of the room exaggerated them to a gigantic size, and from the low position of the candle the light struck upwards and produced deformed foreshortenings. The mountebank's profile was enlarged upon the wall in caricature, and it was strange to see his nose shorten and lengthen as the flame was blown about by draughts. As for Madame Tentaillon, her shadow was no more than a gross hump of shoulders, with now and again a hemisphere of head. The chair legs were spindled out as long as stilts, and the boy sat perched atop of them like a cloud, in the corner of the roof.

It was the boy who took the doctor's fancy. He had a great arched skull, the forehead and the hands of a musician, and a pair of haunting eyes. It was not merely that these eyes were large, or steady, or the softest ruddy brown. There was a look in them, besides, which thrilled the doctor, and made him half uneasy. He was sure he had seen such a look before, and yet he could not remember how or where. It was as if this boy, who was quite a stranger to him, had the eyes of an old friend or an old enemy. And the boy would give him no peace; he seemed profoundly indifferent to what was going on, or rather abstracted from it in a superior contemplation, beating gently with his feet against the bars of the chair, and holding his hands folded on his lap. But, for all that, his eyes kept following the doctor about the room with a thoughtful fixity of gaze. Desprez could not tell whether he was fascinating the boy, or the boy was fascinating him. He busied himself over the sick man: he put questions, he felt the pulse, he jested, he grew a little hot and swore: and still, whenever he looked round, there were the brown eyes waiting for his with the same inquiring, melancholy gaze.

At last the doctor hit on the solution at a leap. He remembered the look now. The little fellow, although he was as straight as a dart, had the eyes that go usually with a crooked back; he was not at all deformed, and yet a deformed person seemed to be looking at you from below his brows. The doctor drew a long breath, he was so much relieved to find a theory (for he loved theories) and to explain away his interest.

For all that, he despatched the invalid with unusual haste, and, still kneeling with one knee on the floor, turned a little round and looked the boy over at his leisure. The boy was not in the least put out, but looked placidly back at the doctor.

"Is this your father?" asked Desprez.

"Oh, no," returned the boy; "my master."

"Are you fond of him?" continued the doctor.

"No, sir," said the boy.

Madame Tentaillon and Desprez exchanged expressive glances.

"That is bad, my man," resumed the latter, with a shade of sternness. "Every one should be fond of the dying, or conceal their sentiments; and your master here is dying. If I have watched a bird a little while stealing my cherries, I have a thought of disappointment when he flies away over my garden wall, and I see him steer for the forest and vanish. How much more a creature such as this, so strong, so astute, so richly endowed with faculties! When I think that, in a few hours the speech will be silenced, the breath extinct, and even the shadow vanished from the wall, I who never saw him, this lady who knew him only as a guest, are touched with some affection."

The boy was silent for a little, and appeared to be reflecting.

"You did not know him," he replied at last. "He was a bad man."

"He is a little pagan," said the landlady. "For that matter, they are all the same, these mountebanks, tumblers, artists, and what not. They have no interior."

But the doctor was still scrutinizing the little pagan, his eyebrows knotted and uplifted.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"Jean-Marie," said the lad.

Desprez leaped upon him with one of his sudden flashes of excitement, and felt his head all over from an ethnological point of view.

"Celtic, Celtic!" he said.

"Celtic!" cried Madame Tentaillon, who had perhaps confounded the word with hydrocephalous. "Poor lad! is it dangerous?"

"That depends," returned the doctor, grimly. And then once more addressing the boy: "And what do you do for your living, Jean-Marie?" he inquired.

"I tumble," was the answer.

"So! Tumble?" repeated Desprez. "Probably healthful. I hazard the guess, Madame Tentaillon, that tumbling is a healthful way of life. And have you never done anything else but tumble?"

"Before I learned that, I used to steal," answered Jean-Marie gravely.

"Upon my word!" cried the doctor. "You are a nice little man for your age. Madame, when my *confrère* comes from Bourron, you will communicate my unfavourable opinion. I leave the case in his hands; but, of course, on any alarming symptom, above all if there should be a sign of rally, do not hesitate to knock me up. I am a doctor no longer, I thank God; but I have been one. Good-night, madame. Good sleep to you, Jean-Marie."

II

MORNING TALK

Dr. Desprez always rose early. Before the smoke arose, before the first cart rattled over the bridge to the day's labour in the fields, he was to be found wandering in his garden. Now he would pick a bunch of grapes; now he would eat a big pear under the trellis; now he would draw all sorts of fancies on the path with the end of his cane; now he would go down and watch the river running endlessly past the timber landing-place at which he moored his boat. There was no time, he used to say, for making theories like the early morning. "I rise earlier than any one else in the village," he once boasted. "It is a fair consequence that I know more and wish to do less with my knowledge."

The doctor was a connoisseur of sunrises, and loved a good theatrical effect to usher in the day. He had a theory of dew, by which he could predict the weather. Indeed, most things served him to that end:

the sound of the bells from all the neighbouring villages, the smell of the forest, the visits and the behaviour of both birds and fishes, the look of the plants in his garden, the disposition of cloud, the colour of the light, and last, although not least, the arsenal of meteorological instruments in a louver-boarded hutch upon the lawn. Ever since he had settled at Gretz, he had been growing more and more into the local meteorologist, the unpaid champion of the local climate. He thought at first there was no place so healthful in the arrondissement. By the end of the second year, he protested there was none so wholesome in the whole department. And for some time before he met Jean-Marie, he had been prepared to challenge all France and the better part of Europe for a rival to his chosen spot.

"Doctor," he would say—"doctor is a foul word. It should not be used to ladies. It implies disease. I remark it, as a flaw in our civilization, that we have not the proper horror of disease. Now I, for my part, have washed my hands of it; I have renounced my laureation; I am no doctor; I am only a worshiper of the true goddess Hygeia. Ah, believe me, it is she who has the cestus! And here, in this exiguous hamlet, has she placed her shrine: here she dwells and lavishes her gifts; here I walk with her in the early morning, and she shows me how strong she has made the peasants, how fruitful she has made the fields, how the trees grow up tall and comely under her eyes, and the fishes in the river become clean and agile at her presence.—Rheumatism!" he would cry, on some malapert interruption, "Oh, yes, I believe we do have a little rheumatism. That could hardly be avoided, you know, on a river. And of course the place stands a little low; and the meadows are marshy, there's no doubt. But, my dear sir, look at Bourron! Bourron stands high. Bourron is close to the forest; plenty of ozone there, you would say. Well, compared with Gretz, Bourron is a perfect shambles."

The morning after he had been summoned to the dying mountebank, the doctor visited the wharf at the tail of his garden, and had a long look at the running water. This he called prayer; but whether his adorations were addressed to the goddess Hygeia or some more orthodox deity, never plainly appeared. For he had uttered doubtful oracles, sometimes declaring that a river was the type of bodily health, sometimes extolling it as the great moral preacher, continually preaching peace, continuity, and diligence to man's tormented spirits. After he had watched a mile or so of the clear water running by before his eyes, seen a fish or two come to the surface with a gleam of silver, and sufficiently admired the long shadows of the trees falling half across the river from the opposite bank, with patches of moving sunlight in between, he strolled once more up the garden and through his house into the street, feeling cool and renovated.

The sound of his feet upon the causeway began the business of the day; for the village was still sound asleep. The church tower looked very airy in the sunlight; a few birds that turned about it seemed to swim in an atmosphere of more than usual rarity; and the doctor, walking in long transparent shadows, filled his lungs amply, and proclaimed himself well contented with the morning.

On one of the posts before Tentaillon's carriage entry he espied a little dark figure perched in a meditative attitude, and immediately recognized Jean-Marie.

"Aha!" he said, stopping before him humorously, with a hand on either knee. "So we rise early in the morning, do we? It appears to me that we have all the vices of a philosopher."

The boy got to his feet and made a grave salutation.

"And how is our patient?" asked Desprez.

It appeared the patient was about the same.

"And why do you rise early in the morning?" he pursued.

Jean-Marie, after a long silence, professed that he hardly knew.

"You hardly know?" repeated Desprez. "We hardly know anything, my man, until we try to learn. Interrogate your consciousness. Come, push me this inquiry home. Do you like it?"

"Yes," said the boy slowly; "yes, I like it."

"And why do you like it?" continued the doctor. "(We are now pursuing the Socratic method.) Why do you like it?"

"It is quiet," answered Jean-Marie; "and I have nothing to do; and then I feel as if I were good."

Dr. Desprez took a seat on the post at the opposite side. He was beginning to take an interest in the talk, for the boy plainly thought before he spoke, and tried to answer truly. "It appears you have a taste for feeling good," said the doctor. "Now, there you puzzle me extremely; for I thought you said you were a thief; and the two are incompatible."

"Is it very bad to steal?" asked Jean-Marie.

"Such is the general opinion, little boy," replied the doctor.

"No; but I mean as I stole," exclaimed the other. "For I had no choice. I think it is surely right to have bread; it must be right to have bread, there comes so plain a want of it. And then they beat me cruelly if I returned with nothing," he added. "I was not ignorant of right and wrong; for before that I had been well taught by a priest, who was very kind to me." (The doctor made a horrible grimace at the word "priest.") "But it seemed to me, when one had nothing to eat and was beaten, it was a different affair. I would not have stolen for tartlets, I believe; but any one would steal for baker's bread."

"And so I suppose," said the doctor, with a rising sneer, "you prayed God to forgive you, and explained the case to Him at length."

"Why, sir?" asked Jean-Marie. "I do not see."

"Your priest would see, however," retorted Desprez.

"Would he?" asked the boy, troubled for the first time. "I should have thought God would have known."

"Eh?" snarled the doctor.

"I should have thought God would have understood me," replied the other. "You do not, I see; but then it was God that made me think so, was it not?"

"Little boy, little boy," said Dr. Desprez, "I told you already you had the vices of philosophy; if you display the virtues also, I must go. I am a student of the blessed laws of health, an observer of plain and temperate nature in her common walks; and I cannot preserve my equanimity in presence of a monster. Do you understand?"

"No, sir," said the boy.

"I will make my meaning clear to you," replied the doctor. "Look there at the sky—behind the belfry first, where it is so light, and then up and up, turning your chin back, right to the top of the dome, where it is already as blue as at noon. Is not that a beautiful colour? Does it not please the heart? We have seen it all our lives, until it has grown in with our familiar thoughts. Now," changing his tone, "suppose that sky to become suddenly of a live and fiery amber, like the colour of clear coals, and growing scarlet toward the top—I do not say it would be any the less beautiful; but would you like it as well?"

"I suppose not," answered Jean-Marie.

"Neither do I like you," returned the doctor, roughly. "I hate all odd people, and you are the most curious little boy in all the world."

Jean-Marie seemed to ponder for awhile, and then he raised his head again and looked over at the doctor with an air of candid inquiry. "But are not you a very curious gentleman?" he asked.

The doctor threw away his stick, bounded on the boy, clasped him to his bosom, and kissed him on both cheeks. "Admirable, admirable imp!" he cried. "What a morning, what an hour for a theorist of forty-two! No," he continued, apostrophizing heaven, "I did not know that such boys existed; I was ignorant they made them so; I had doubted of my race; and, now! It is like," he added, picking up his stick, "like a lovers' meeting. I have bruised my favourite staff in that moment of enthusiasm. The jury, however, is not grave." He caught the boy looking at him in obvious wonder, embarrassment, and alarm. "Hullo!" said he, "why do you look at me like that? Egad, I believe the boy despises me. Do you despise me, boy?"

"Oh, no," replied Jean-Marie, seriously; "only I do not understand."

"You must excuse me, sir," returned the doctor, with gravity; "I am still so young. Oh, hang him!" he added to himself. And he took his seat again and observed the boy sardonically. "He has spoiled the quiet of my morning," thought he. "I shall be nervous all day, and have a febricule when I digest. Let me compose myself." And so he dismissed his preoccupations by an effort of the will which he had long practised, and let his soul roam abroad in the contemplation of the morning. He inhaled the air, tasting it critically as a connoisseur tastes a vintage, and prolonging the expiration with hygienic gusto. He counted the little flecks of cloud along the sky. He followed the movements of the birds round the church tower—making long sweeps, hanging poised, or turning airy somersaults in fancy, and beating the wind with imaginary pinions. And in this way he regained peace of mind and animal composure, conscious of his limbs, conscious of the sight of his eyes, conscious that the air had a cool taste, like a fruit, at the top of his throat; and, at last, in complete abstraction, he began to sing. The doctor had but one air —"Malbrouck s'en va-t-en guerre"; even with that he was on terms of mere politeness; and his musical exploits were always reserved for moments when he was alone and entirely happy.

He was recalled to earth rudely by a pained expression on the boy's face. "What do you think of my singing?" he inquired, stopping in the middle of a note; and then, after he had waited some little while and received no answer, "What do you think of my singing?" he repeated, imperiously.

"I do not like it," faltered Jean-Marie.

"Oh, come!" cried the doctor. "Possibly you are a performer yourself?"

"I sing better than that," replied the boy.

The doctor eyed him for some seconds in stupefaction. He was aware that he was angry, and blushed for himself in consequence, which made him angrier. "If this is how you address your master!" he said at last, with a shrug and a flourish of his arms.

"I do not speak to him at all," returned the boy. "I do not like him."

"Then you like me?" snapped Dr. Desprez, with unusual eagerness.

"I do not know," answered Jean-Marie.

The doctor rose. "I shall wish you a good-morning," he said. "You are too much for me. Perhaps you have blood in your veins, perhaps celestial ichor, or perhaps you circulate nothing more gross than respirable air; but of one thing I am inexpugnably assured:—that you are no human being. No, boy,"—shaking his stick at him—"you are not a human being. Write, write it in your memory—'I am not a human being—I have no pretension to be a human being—I am a deev, a dream, an angel, an acrostic, an illusion—what you please, but not a human being.' And so accept my humble salutations and farewell!"

And with that the doctor made off along the street in some emotion, and the boy stood, mentally gaping, where he left him.

III

THE ADOPTION

Madame Desprez, who answered to the Christian name of Anastasie, presented an agreeable type of her sex; exceedingly wholesome to look upon, a stout *brune*, with cool smooth cheeks, steady, dark eyes, and hands that neither art nor nature could improve. She was the sort of person over whom adversity passes like a summer cloud; she might, in the worst of conjunctions, knit her brows into one vertical furrow for a moment, but the next it would be gone. She had much of the placidity of a contented nun; with little of her piety, however; for Anastasie was of a very mundane nature, fond of oysters and old wine, and somewhat bold pleasantries, and devoted to her husband for her own sake rather than for his. She was imperturbably good-natured, but had no idea of self-sacrifice. To live in that pleasant old house, with a green garden behind and bright flowers about the window, to eat and drink of the best, to gossip with a neighbour for a quarter of an hour, never to wear stays or a dress except when she went to Fontainebleau shopping, to be kept in a continual supply of racy novels, and to be married to Dr. Desprez and have no ground of jealousy, filled the cup of her nature to the brim. Those who had known the doctor in bachelor days, when he had aired quite as many theories, but of a different order, attributed his present philosophy to the study of Anastasie. It was her brute enjoyment that he rationalized and perhaps vainly imitated.

Madame Desprez was an artist in the kitchen, and made coffee to a nicety. She had a knack of tidiness, with which she had infected the doctor; everything was in its place; everything capable of polish shone gloriously; and dust was a thing banished from her empire. Aline, their single servant, had no other business in the world but to scour and burnish. So Dr. Desprez lived in his house like a fatted calf, warmed and cosseted to his heart's content.

The midday meal was excellent. There was a ripe melon, a fish from the river in a memorable Béarnaise sauce, a fat fowl in a fricassée, and a dish of asparagus, followed by some fruit. The doctor drank half a bottle *plus* one glass, the wife half a bottle *minus* the same quantity, which was a marital privilege, of an excellent Côte-Rôtie, seven years old. Then the coffee was brought, and a flask of Chartreuse for madame, for the doctor despised and distrusted such decoctions; and then Aline left the wedded pair to the pleasures of memory and digestion.

"It is a very fortunate circumstance, my cherished one," observed the doctor—"this coffee is adorable—a very fortunate circumstance upon the whole—Anatasie, I beseech you, go without that poison for to-day; only one day, and you will feel the benefit, I pledge my reputation."

"What is this fortunate circumstance, my friend?" inquired Anastasie, not heeding his protest, which was of daily recurrence.

"That we have no children, my beautiful," replied the doctor. "I think of it more and more as the years go on, and with more and more gratitude towards the Power that dispenses such afflictions. Your health, my darling, my studious quiet, our little kitchen delicacies, how they would all have suffered, how they would all have been sacrificed! And for what? Children are the last word of human imperfection. Health flees before their face. They cry, my dear; they put vexatious questions; they demand to be fed, to be washed, to be educated, to have their noses blown; and then, when the time comes, they break our hearts, as I break this piece of sugar. A pair of professed egoists, like you and me, should avoid offspring, like an infidelity."

"Indeed!" said she; and she laughed. "Now, that is like you—to take credit for the thing you could not help."

"My dear," returned the doctor, solemnly, "we might have adopted."

"Never!" cried madame. "Never, doctor, with my consent. If the child were my own flesh and blood, I would not say no. But to take another person's indiscretion on my shoulders, my dear friend, I have too much sense."

"Precisely," replied the doctor. "We both had. And I am all the better pleased with our wisdom, because—because—" He looked at her sharply.

"Because what?" she asked, with a faint premonition of danger.

"Because I have found the right person," said the doctor firmly, "and shall adopt him this afternoon."

Anastasie looked at him out of a mist. "You have lost your reason," she said; and there was a clang in her voice that seemed to threaten trouble.

"Not so, my dear," he replied; "I retain its complete exercise. To the proof: instead of attempting to cloak my inconsistency, I have, by way of preparing you, thrown it into strong relief. You will there, I think, recognize the philosopher who has the ecstasy to call you wife. The fact is, I have been reckoning all this while without an accident. I never thought to find a son of my own. Now, last night, I found one. Do not unnecessarily alarm yourself, my dear; he is not a drop of blood to me that I know. It is his mind, darling, his mind that calls me father."

"His mind!" she repeated with a titter between scorn and hysterics. "His mind, indeed! Henri, is this an idiotic pleasantry, or are you mad? His mind! And what of my mind?"

"Truly," replied the doctor with a shrug, "you have your finger on the hitch. He will be strikingly antipathetic to my beautiful Anastasie. She will never understand him; he will never understand her. You married the animal side of my nature, dear; and it is on the spiritual side that I find my affinity for Jean-Marie. So much so, that, to be perfectly frank, I stand in some awe of him myself. You will easily perceive that I am announcing a calamity for you. Do not," he broke out in tones of real solicitude—"do not give way to tears after a meal, Anastasie. You will certainly give yourself a false digestion."

Anastasie controlled herself. "You know how willing I am to humour you," she said, "in all reasonable matters. But on this point——"

"My dear love," interrupted the doctor, eager to prevent a refusal, "who wished to leave Paris? Who made me give up cards, and the opera, and the boulevard, and my social relations, and all that was my life before I knew you? Have I been faithful? Have I been obedient? Have I not borne my doom with cheerfulness? In all honesty, Anastasie, have I not a right to a stipulation on my side? I have, and you know it. I stipulate my son."

Anastasie was aware of defeat; she struck her colours instantly. "You will break my heart," she sighed.

"Not in the least," said he. "You will feel a trifling inconvenience for a month, just as I did when I was first brought to this vile hamlet; then your admirable sense and temper will prevail, and I see you already as content as ever, and making your husband the happiest of men."

"You know I can refuse you nothing," she said, with a last flicker of resistance; "nothing that will make you truly happier. But will this? Are you sure, my husband? Last night, you say, you found him! He may be the worst of humbugs."

"I think not," replied the doctor. "But do not suppose me so unwary as to adopt him out of hand. I am, I flatter myself, a finished man of the world; I have had all possibilities in view; my plan is contrived to meet them all. I take the lad as stableboy. If he pilfer, if he grumble, if he desire to change, I shall see I was mistaken; I shall recognize him for no son of mine, and send him tramping."

"You will never do so when the time

comes," said his wife; "I know your good heart."

She reached out her hand to him, with a sigh; the doctor smiled as he took it and carried it to his lips; he had gained his point with greater ease than he had dared to hope; for perhaps the twentieth time he had proved the efficacy of his trusty argument, his Excalibur, the hint of a return to Paris. Six months in the capital, for a man of the doctor's antecedents and relations, implied no less a calamity than total ruin. Anastasie had saved the remainder of his fortune by keeping him strictly in the country. The very name of Paris put her in a blue fear; and she would have allowed her husband to keep a menagerie in the back garden, let alone adopting a stable-boy, rather than permit the question of return to be discussed.

About four of the afternoon, the mountebank rendered up his ghost; he had never been conscious since his seizure. Dr. Desprez was present at his last passage, and declared the farce over. Then he took Jean-Marie by the shoulder and led him out into the inn garden where there was a convenient bench beside the river. Here he sat him down and made the boy place himself on his left.

"Jean-Marie," he said very gravely, "this world is exceedingly vast; and even France, which is only a small corner of it, is a great place for a little lad like you. Unfortunately, it is full of eager, shouldering people moving on; and there are very few bakers' shops for so many eaters. Your master is dead; you are not fit to gain a living by yourself; you do not wish to steal? No. Your situation, then, is undesirable; it is, for the moment, critical. On the other hand, you behold in me a man not old, though elderly, still enjoying the youth of the heart and the intelligence; a man of instruction; easily situated in this world's affairs; keeping a good table:—a man, neither as friend nor host, to be despised. I offer you your food and clothes, and to teach you lessons in the evening, which will be infinitely more to the purpose for a lad of your stamp than those of all the priests in Europe. I propose no wages, but if ever you take a thought to leave me, the door shall be open, and I will give you a hundred francs to start the world upon. In return, I have an old horse and chaise, which you would very speedily learn to clean and keep in order. Do not hurry yourself to answer, and take it or leave it as you judge aright. Only remember this, that I am no sentimentalist or charitable person, but a man who lives rigourously to himself; and that if I make the proposal, it is for my own ends—it is because I perceive clearly an advantage to myself. And now, reflect."

"I shall be very glad. I do not see what else I can do. I thank you, sir, most kindly, and I will try to be useful," said the boy.

"Thank you," said the doctor warmly, rising at the same time and wiping his brow, for he had suffered agonies while the thing hung in the wind. A refusal, after the scene at noon, would have placed him in a ridiculous light before Anastasie. "How hot and heavy is the evening, to be sure! I have always had a fancy to be a fish in summer, Jean-Marie, here in the Loing beside Gretz. I should lie under a water-lily and listen to the bells, which must sound most delicately down below. That would be a life—do you not think so, too?"

"Yes," said Jean-Marie.

"Thank God you have imagination!" cried the doctor, embracing the boy with his usual effusive warmth, though it was a proceeding that seemed to disconcert the sufferer almost as much as if he had been an English schoolboy of the same age. "And now," he added, "I will take you to my wife."

Madame Desprez sat in the dining-room in a cool wrapper. All the blinds were down, and the tile floor had been recently sprinkled with water; her eyes were half shut, but she affected to be reading a novel as they entered. Though she was a bustling woman, she enjoyed repose between whiles and had a remarkable appetite for sleep.

The doctor went through a solemn form of introduction, adding, for the benefit of both parties, "You must try to like each other for my sake."

"He is very pretty," said Anastasie. "Will you kiss me, my pretty little fellow?"

The doctor was furious, and dragged her into the passage. "Are you a fool, Anastasie?" he said. "What is all this I hear about the tact of women? Heaven knows, I have not met with it in my experience. You address my little philosopher as if he were an infant. He must be spoken to with more respect, I tell you; he must not be kissed and Georgy-porgy'd like an ordinary child."

"I only did it to please you, I am sure," replied Anastasie; "but I will try to do better."

The doctor apologized for his warmth. "But I do wish him," he continued, "to feel at home among us. And really your conduct was so idiotic, my cherished one, and so utterly and distantly out of place, that a saint might have been pardoned a little vehemence in disapproval. Do, do try—if it is possible for a woman to understand young people—but of course it is not, and I waste my breath. Hold your tongue as much as possible at least, and observe my conduct narrowly; it will serve you for a model."

Anastasie did as she was bidden, and considered the doctor's behaviour. She observed that he embraced the boy three times in the course of the evening, and managed generally to confound and abash the little fellow out of speech and appetite. But she had the true womanly heroism in little affairs. Not only did she refrain from the cheap revenge of exposing the doctor's errors to himself, but she did her best to remove their ill-effect on Jean-Marie. When Desprez went out for his last breath of air before retiring for the night, she came over to the boy's side and took his hand.

"You must not be surprised nor frightened by my husband's manners," she said. "He is the kindest of men, but so clever that he is sometimes difficult to understand. You will soon grow used to him, and then you will love him, for that nobody can help. As for me, you may be sure, I shall try to make you happy, and will not bother you at all. I think we should be excellent friends, you and I. I am not clever, but I am very good-natured. Will you give me a kiss?"

He held up his face, and she took him in her arms and then began to cry. The woman had spoken in complaisance; but she had warmed to her own words, and tenderness followed. The doctor, entering, found them enlaced: he concluded that his wife was in fault; and he was just beginning, in an awful voice, "Anastasie—," when she looked up at him, smiling, with an upraised finger; and he held his peace, wondering, while she led the boy to his attic.

IV

THE EDUCATION OF A PHILOSOPHER

The installation of the adopted stable-boy was thus happily effected, and the wheels of life continued to run smoothly in the doctor's house. Jean-Marie did his horse and carriage duty in the morning; sometimes helped in the housework; sometimes walked abroad with the doctor, to drink wisdom from the fountain-head; and was introduced at night to the sciences and the dead tongues. He retained his singular placidity of mind and manner; he was rarely in fault; but he made only a very partial progress in his studies, and remained much of a stranger in the family.

The doctor was a pattern of regularity. All forenoon he worked on his great book, the "Comparative Pharmacopœia, or Historical Dictionary of all Medicines," which as yet consisted principally of slips of paper and pins. When finished it was to fill many personable volumes and to combine antiquarian interest with professional utility. But the doctor was studious of literary graces and the picturesque; an anecdote, a touch of manners, a moral qualification, or a sounding epithet was sure to be preferred before a piece of science; a little more, and he would have written the "Comparative Pharmacopœia" in verse! The article "Mummia," for instance, was already complete, though the remainder of the work had not progressed beyond the letter A. It was exceedingly copious and entertaining, written with quaintness and colour, exact, erudite, a literary article; but it would hardly have afforded guidance to a practising physician of to-day. The feminine good-sense of his wife had led her to point this out with uncompromising sincerity; for the Dictionary was duly read aloud to her, betwixt sleep and waking, as it proceeded toward an infinitely distant completion; and the doctor was a little sore on the subject of mummies, and sometimes resented an allusion with asperity.

After the midday meal and a proper period of digestion, he walked, sometimes alone, sometimes accompanied by Jean-Marie; for madame would have preferred any hardship rather than walk.

She was, as I have said, a very busy person, continually occupied about material comforts, and ready to drop asleep over a novel the instant she was disengaged. This was the less objectionable, as she never snored or grew distempered in complexion when she slept. On the contrary, she looked the very picture of luxurious and appetizing ease, and woke without a start to the perfect possession of her faculties. I am afraid she was greatly an animal, but she was a very nice animal to have about. In this way, she had little to do with Jean-Marie; but the sympathy which had been established between them on the first night remained unbroken; they held occasional conversations, mostly on household matters; to the extreme disappointment of the doctor, they occasionally sallied off together to that temple of debasing superstition, the village church; madame and he, both in their Sunday's best, drove twice a month to Fontainebleau and returned laden with purchases; and in short, although the doctor still continued to regard them as irreconcilably antipathetic, their relation was as intimate, friendly, and confidential as their natures suffered.

I fear, however, that in her heart of hearts, madame kindly despised and pitied the boy. She had no admiration for his class of virtues; she liked a smart, polite, forward, roguish sort of boy, cap in hand, light of foot, meeting the eye; she liked volubility, charm, a little vice—the promise of a second Dr. Desprez. And it was her indefeasible belief that Jean-Marie was dull. "Poor dear boy," she had said once, "how sad it is that he should be so stupid!" She had never repeated that remark, for the doctor had raged like a wild bull, denouncing the brutal bluntness of her mind, bemoaning his own fate to be so unequally mated with an ass, and, what touched Anastasie more nearly, menacing the table china by the fury of his gesticulations. But she adhered silently to her opinion; and when Jean-Marie was sitting, stolid, blank, but not unhappy, over his unfinished tasks, she would snatch her opportunity in the doctor's absence, go over to him, put her arms about his neck, lay her cheek to his, and communicate her sympathy with his distress. "Do not mind," she would say; "I, too, am not at all clever, and I can assure you that it makes no difference in life."

The doctor's view was naturally different. That gentleman never wearied of the sound of his own voice, which was, to say the truth, agreeable enough to hear. He now had a listener, who was not so cynically indifferent as Anastasie, and who sometimes put him on his mettle by the most relevant objections. Besides, was he not educating the boy? And education, philosophers are agreed, is the most philosophical of duties. What can be more heavenly to poor mankind than to have one's hobby grow into a duty to the State? Then, indeed, do the ways of life become ways of pleasantness. Never had the doctor seen reason to be more content with his endowments. Philosophy flowed smoothly from his lips. He was so agile a dialectician that he could trace his nonsense, when challenged, back to some root in sense, and prove it to be a sort of flower upon his system. He slipped out of antinomies like a fish, and left his disciple marveling at the rabbi's depth.

Moreover, deep down in his heart the doctor was disappointed with the ill-success of his more formal education. A boy, chosen by so acute an observer for his aptitude, and guided along the path of learning by so philosophic an instructor, was bound, by the nature of the universe, to make a more obvious and lasting advance. Now Jean-Marie was slow in all things, impenetrable in others; and his power of forgetting was fully on a level with his power to learn. Therefore the doctor cherished his peripatetic lectures, to which the boy attended, which he generally appeared to enjoy, and by which he often profited.

Many and many were the talks they had together; and health and moderation proved the subject of the doctor's divagations. To these he lovingly returned.

"I lead you," he would say, "by the green pastures. My system, my beliefs, my medicines, are resumed in one phrase—to avoid excess. Blessed nature, healthy, temperate nature, abhors and exterminates excess. Human law, in this matter, imitates at a great distance her provisions; and we must strive to supplement the efforts of the law. Yes, boy, we must be a law to ourselves and for our neighbours—*lex armata*—armed, emphatic, tyrannous law. If you see a crapulous human ruin snuffing, dash him from his box! The judge, though in a way an admission of disease, is less offensive to me than either the doctor or the priest. Above all, the doctor—the doctor and the purulent trash and garbage of his pharmacopœia! Pure air—from the neighbourhood of a pinetum for the sake of the turpentine—unadulterated wine, and the reflections of an unsophisticated spirit in the presence of the works of nature—these, my boy, are the best medical appliances and the best religious comforts. Devote yourself to these. Hark! there are the bells of Bourron (the wind is in the north, it will be fair). How clear and airy is the sound! The nerves are harmonized and quieted; the mind attuned to silence; and observe how easily and regularly beats the heart! Your unenlightened doctor would see nothing in these sensations; and yet you yourself perceive they are a part of health.—Did you remember your cinchona this morning? Good. Cinchona also is a work of nature: it is, after all, only the bark of a tree which we might gather for ourselves if we lived in the locality.—What a world is this! Though a professed atheist, I delight to bear my testimony to the world. Look at the gratuitous remedies and pleasures that surround our path! The river runs by the garden end, our bath, our fish-pond, our natural system of drainage. There is a well in the court which sends up sparkling water from the earth's very heart, clean, cool, and, with a little wine, most wholesome. The district is notorious for its salubrity; rheumatism is the only prevalent complaint, and I myself have never had a touch of it. I tell you—and my opinion is based upon the coldest, clearest processes of reason—if I, if you, desired to leave this home of pleasures, it would be the duty, it would be the privilege, of our best friend to prevent us with a pistol bullet."

One beautiful June day they sat upon the hill outside the village. The river, as blue as heaven, shone here and there among the foliage. The indefatigable birds turned and flickered about Gretz church tower. A healthy wind blew from over the forest, and the sound of innumerable thousands of tree-tops and innumerable millions on millions of green leaves was abroad in the air, and filled the ear with something between whispered speech and singing. It seemed as if every blade of grass must hide a cigale; and the fields rang merrily with their music, jingling far and near as with the sleigh-bells of the fairy queen. From their station on the slope the eye embraced a large space of poplar'd plain upon the one hand, the waving hill-tops of the forest on the other, and Gretz itself in the middle, a handful of roofs. Under the bestriding arch of the blue heavens, the place seemed dwindled to a toy. It seemed incredible that people dwelt, and could find room to turn or air to breathe, in such a corner of the world. The thought came home to the boy, perhaps for the first time, and he gave it words.

"How small it looks!" he sighed.

"Ay," replied the doctor, "small enough now. Yet it was once a walled city; thriving, full of furred burgesses and men in armour, humming with affairs;—with tall spires, for aught that I know, and portly towers along the battlements. A thousand chimneys ceased smoking at the curfew bell. There were gibbets at the gate as thick as scarecrows. In time of war, the assault swarmed against it with ladders, the arrows fell like leaves, the defenders sallied hotly over the drawbridge, each side uttered its cry as they plied their weapons. Do you know that the walls extended as far as the Commanderie? Tradition so reports. Alas, what a long way off is all this confusion—nothing left of it but my quiet words spoken in your ear—and the town itself shrunk to the hamlet underneath us! By-and-by came the English wars—you shall hear more of the English, a stupid people, who sometimes blundered into good—and Gretz was taken, sacked, and burned. It is the history of many towns; but Gretz never rose again; it was never rebuilt; its ruins were a quarry to serve the growth of rivals; and the stones of Gretz are now erect along the streets of Nemours. It gratifies me that our old house was the first to rise after the calamity; when the town had come to an end, it inaugurated the hamlet."

"I, too, am glad of that," said Jean-Marie.

"It should be the temple of the humbler virtues," responded the doctor with a savoury gusto. "Perhaps one of the reasons why I love my little hamlet as I do, is that we have a similar history, she and I. Have I told you that I was once rich?"

"I do not think so," answered Jean-Marie. "I do not think I should have forgotten. I am sorry you should have lost your fortune."

"Sorry?" cried the doctor. "Why, I find I have scarce begun your education after all. Listen to me! Would you rather live in the old Gretz or in the new, free from the alarms of war, with the green country at the door, without noise, passports, the exactions of the soldiery, or the jangle of the curfew-bell to send us off to bed by sundown?"

"I suppose I should prefer the new," replied the boy.

"Precisely," returned the doctor; "so do I. And, in the same way, I prefer my present moderate fortune to my former wealth. Golden mediocrity! cried the adorable ancients; and I subscribe to their enthusiasm. Have I not good wine, good food, good air, the fields and the forest for my walk, a house, an admirable wife, a boy whom I protest I cherish like a son? Now, if I were still rich, I should indubitably make my residence in Paris—you know Paris—Paris and Paradise are not convertible terms. This pleasant noise of the wind streaming among leaves changed into the grinding Babel of the street, the stupid glare of plaster substituted for this quiet pattern of greens and grays, the nerves shattered, the digestion falsified—picture the fall! Already you perceive the consequences; the mind is stimulated, the heart steps to a different measure, and the man is himself no longer. I have passionately studied myself—the true business of philosophy. I know my character as the musician knows the ventages of his flute. Should I return to Paris, I should ruin myself gambling; nay, I go further—I should break the heart of my Anastasie with infidelities."

This was too much for Jean-Marie. That a place should so transform the most excellent of men transcended his belief. Paris, he protested, was even an agreeable place of residence. "Nor when I lived in that city did I feel much difference," he pleaded.

"What!" cried the doctor. "Did you not steal when you were there?"

But the boy could never be brought to see that he had done anything wrong when he stole. Nor, indeed, did the doctor think he had; but that gentleman was never very scrupulous when in want of a retort.

"And now," he concluded, "do you begin to understand? My only friends were those who ruined me. Gretz has been my academy, my sanatorium, my heaven of innocent pleasures. If millions are offered me, I wave them back: *Retro, Sathanas!*—evil one, begone! Fix your mind on my example; despise riches, avoid the debasing influence of cities. Hygiene—hygiene and mediocrity of fortune—these be your watchwords during life!"

The doctor's system of hygiene strikingly coincided with his tastes; and his picture of the perfect life was a faithful description of the one he was leading at the time. But it is easy to convince a boy, whom you supply with all the facts for the discussion. And, besides, there was one thing admirable in the philosophy, and that was the enthusiasm of the philosopher. There was never any one more vigorously determined to be pleased; and if he was not a great logician, and so had no right to convince the intellect, he was certainly something of a poet, and had a fascination to seduce the heart. What he could not achieve in his customary humour of a radiant admiration of himself and his circumstances, he sometimes effected in his fits of gloom.

"Boy," he would say, "avoid me to-day. If I were superstitious, I should even beg for an interest in your prayers. I am in the black fit; the evil spirit of King Saul, the hag of the merchant Abudah, the personal devil of the medieval monk, is with me—is in me," tapping on his breast. "The vices of my nature are now uppermost; innocent pleasures woo me in vain; I long for Paris, for my wallowing in the mire. See," he would continue, producing a handful of silver, "I denude myself, I am not to be trusted with the price of a fare. Take it, keep it for me, squander it on deleterious candy, throw it in the deepest of the river—I will homologate your action. Save me from that part of myself which I disown. If you see me falter, do not hesitate; if necessary, wreck the train! I speak, of course, by a parable. Any extremity were better than for me to reach Paris alive."

Doubtless the doctor enjoyed these little scenes, as a variation in his part; they represented the Byronic element in the somewhat artificial poetry of his existence; but to the boy, though he was dimly aware of their theatricality, they represented more. The doctor made, perhaps, too little, the boy possibly too much, of the reality and gravity of these temptations.

One day a great light shone for Jean-Marie. "Could not riches be used well?" he asked.

"In theory, yes," replied the doctor. "But it is found in experience that no one does so. All the world imagine they will be exceptional when they grow wealthy, but possession is debasing, new desires spring up; and the silly taste for ostentation eats out the heart of pleasure."

"Then you might be better if you had less," said the boy.

"Certainly not," replied the doctor; but his voice quavered as he spoke.

"Why?" demanded pitiless innocence.

Dr. Desprez saw all the colours of the rainbow in a moment; the stable universe appeared to be about capsizing with him. "Because," said he—affecting deliberation after an obvious pause—"because I have formed my life for my present income. It is not good for men of my years to be violently dissevered from their habits."

That was a sharp brush. The doctor breathed hard, and fell into taciturnity for the afternoon. As for the boy, he was delighted with the resolution of his doubts; even wondered that he had not foreseen the obvious and conclusive answer. His faith in the doctor was a stout piece of goods. Desprez was inclined to be a sheet in the wind's eye after dinner, especially after Rhone wine, his favourite weakness. He would then remark on the warmth of his feeling for Anastasie, and with inflamed cheeks and a loose, flustered smile, debate upon all sorts of topics, and be freely and indiscreetly witty. But the adopted stable-boy would not permit himself to entertain a doubt that savoured of ingratitude. It is quite true that a man may be a second father to you, and yet take too much to drink; but the best natures are ever slow to accept such truths.

The doctor thoroughly possessed his heart, but perhaps he exaggerated his influence over his mind. Certainly Jean-Marie adopted some of his master's opinions, but I have yet to learn that he ever surrendered one of his own. Convictions existed in him by divine right; they were virgin, unwrought, the brute metal of decision. He could add others indeed, but he could not put away; neither did he care if they were perfectly agreed among themselves; and his spiritual pleasures had nothing to do with turning them over or justifying them in words. Words were with him a mere accomplishment, like dancing. When he was by himself, his pleasures were almost vegetable. He would slip into the woods toward Achères, and sit in the mouth of a cave among gray birches. His soul stared straight out of his eyes; he did not move or think; sunlight, thin shadows moving in the wind, the edge of firs against the sky, occupied and bound his faculties. He was pure unity, a spirit wholly abstracted. A single mood filled him, to which all the objects of sense contributed, as the colours of the spectrum merge and disappear in white light.

So while the doctor made himself drunk with words, the adopted stable-boy bemused himself with silence.

V

TREASURE TROVE

The doctor's carriage was a two-wheeled gig with a hood; a kind of vehicle in much favour among country doctors. On how many roads has one not seen it, a great way off between the poplars!—in how many village streets, tied to a gate-post! This sort of chariot is affected—particularly at the trot—by a kind of pitching movement to and fro across the axle, which well entitles it to the style of a noddy. The hood describes a considerable arc against the landscape, with a solemnly absurd effect on the contemplative pedestrian. To ride in such a carriage cannot be numbered among the things that appertain to glory; but I have no doubt it may be useful in liver complaint. Thence, perhaps, its wide popularity among physicians.

One morning early, Jean-Marie led forth the doctor's noddy, opened the gate, and mounted to the driving-seat. The doctor followed, arrayed from top to toe in spotless linen, armed with an immense flesh-coloured umbrella, and girt with a botanical case on a baldric; and the equipage drove off smartly in a breeze of its own provocation. They were bound for Franchard, to collect plants, with an eye to the "Comparative Pharmacopœia."

A little rattling on the open roads, and they came to the borders of the forest and struck into an unfrequented track; the noddy yawed softly over the sand, with an accompaniment of snapping twigs. There was a great, green softly murmuring cloud of congregated foliage overhead. In the arcades of the forest the air retained the freshness of the night. The athletic bearing of the trees, each bearing its leafy mountain, pleased the mind like so many statues, and the lines of the trunk led the eye admiringly upward to where the extreme leaves sparkled in a patch of azure. Squirrels leaped in mid air. It was a proper spot for a devotee of the goddess Hygeia.

"Have you been to Franchard, Jean-Marie?" inquired the doctor. "I fancy not."

"Never," replied the boy.

"It is ruin in a gorge," continued Desprez, adopting his expository voice; "the ruin of a hermitage and chapel. History tells us much of Franchard; how the recluse was often slain by robbers; how he lived on a most insufficient diet; how he was expected to pass his days in prayer. A letter is preserved, addressed to one of these solitaries by the superior of his order, full of admirable hygienic advice; bidding him go from his book to praying, and so back again, for variety's sake, and when he was weary of both to stroll about his garden and observe the honey bees. It is to this day my own system. You must have often remarked me leaving the 'Pharmacopœia'—often even in the middle of a phrase—to come forth into the sun and air. I admire the writer of that letter from my heart; he was a man of thought on the most important subjects. But, indeed, had I lived in the Middle Ages (I am heartily glad that I did not) I should have been an eremite myself—if I had not been a professed buffoon, that is. These were the only philosophical lives yet open: laughter or prayer; sneers, we might say, and tears. Until the sun of the Positive arose, the wise man had to make his choice between these two."

"I have been a buffoon, of course," observed Jean-Marie.

"I cannot imagine you to have excelled in your profession," said the doctor, admiring the boy's gravity. "Do you ever laugh?"

"Oh, yes," replied the other. "I laugh often. I am very fond of jokes."

"Singular being!" said Desprez. "But I divagate (I perceive in a thousand ways that I grow old). Franchard was at length destroyed in the English wars, the same that levelled Gretz. But—here is the point—the hermits (for there were already more than one) had foreseen the danger and carefully concealed the sacrificial vessels. These vessels were of monstrous value, Jean-Marie—monstrous value—priceless, we may say; exquisitely worked, of exquisite material. And now, mark me, they have never been found. In the reign of Louis Quatorze some fellows were digging hard by the ruins. Suddenly—tock!—the spade hit upon an obstacle. Imagine the men looking one to another; imagine how their hearts bounded, how their colour came and went. It was a coffer, and in Franchard the place of buried treasure! They tore it open like famished beasts. Alas! it was not the treasure; only some priestly robes, which, at the touch of the eating air, fell upon themselves and instantly wasted into dust. The perspiration of these good fellows turned cold upon them, Jean-Marie. I will pledge my reputation, if there was anything like a cutting wind, one or other had a pneumonia for his trouble."

"I should like to have seen them turning into dust," said Jean-Marie. "Otherwise, I should not have cared so greatly."

"You have no imagination," cried the doctor. "Picture to yourself the scene. Dwell on the idea—a great treasure lying in the earth for centuries: the material for a giddy, copious, opulent existence not employed; dresses and exquisite pictures unseen; the swiftest galloping horses not stirring a hoof, arrested by a spell; women with the beautiful faculty of smiles, not smiling; cards, dice, opera singing, orchestras, castles, beautiful parks and gardens, big ships with a tower of sailcloth, all lying unborn in a coffin—and the stupid trees growing overhead in the sunlight, year after year. The thought drives one frantic."

"It is only money," replied Jean-Marie. "It would do harm."

"O come!" cried Desprez, "that is philosophy; it is all very fine, but not to the point just now. And besides, it is not 'only money,' as you call it; there are works of art in the question; the vessels were carved. You speak like a child. You weary me exceedingly, quoting my words out of all logical connection, like a paroquet."

"And at any rate, we have nothing to do with it," returned the boy submissively.

They struck the Route Ronde at that moment; and the sudden change to the rattling causeway combined, with the doctor's irritation, to keep him silent. The noddy jigged along; the trees went by, looking on silently, as if they had something on their minds. The Quadrilateral was passed; then came Franchard. They put up the horse at the little solitary inn, and went forth strolling; the gorge was dyed deeply with heather; the rocks and birches standing luminous in the sun. A great humming of bees about the flowers disposed Jean-Marie to sleep, and he sat down against a clump of heather, while the doctor went briskly to and fro, with quick turns, culling his simples.

The boy's head had fallen a little forward, his eyes were closed, his fingers had fallen lax about his knees, when a sudden cry called him to his feet. It was a strange sound, thin and brief; it fell dead, and silence returned as though it had never been interrupted. He had not recognized the doctor's voice; but, as there was no one else in all the valley, it was plainly the doctor who had given utterance to the sound. He looked right and left, and there was Desprez, standing in a niche between two boulders, and looking round on his adopted son with a countenance as white as paper.

"A viper!" cried Jean-Marie, running toward him. "A viper! You are bitten!"

The doctor came down heavily out of the cleft, and advanced in silence to meet the boy, whom he took roughly by the shoulder.

"I have found it," he said, with a gasp.

"A plant?" asked Jean-Marie.

Desprez had a fit of unnatural gaiety, which the rocks took up and mimicked. "A plant!" he repeated scornfully. "Well—yes—a plant. And here," he added suddenly, showing his right hand, which he had hitherto concealed behind his back—"here is one of the bulbs."

Jean-Marie saw a dirty platter, coated with earth.

"That?" said he. "It is a plate!"

"It is a coach and horses," cried the doctor. "Boy," he continued, growing warmer, "I plucked away a great pad of moss from between these boulders, and disclosed a crevice; and when I looked in, what do you suppose I saw? I saw a house in Paris with a court and garden, I saw my wife shining with diamonds, I saw myself a deputy, I saw you—well, I—I saw your future," he concluded, rather feebly. "I have just discovered America," he added.

"But what is it?" asked the boy.

"The Treasure of Franchard," cried the doctor; and, throwing his brown straw hat upon the ground, he whooped like an Indian and sprang upon Jean-Marie, whom he suffocated with embraces and bedewed with tears. Then he flung himself down among the heather and once more laughed until the valley rang.

But the boy had now an interest of his own, a boy's interest. No sooner was he released from the doctor's accolade than he ran to the boulders, sprang into the niche, and, thrusting his hand into the crevice, drew forth one after another, encrusted with the earth of ages, the flagons, candlesticks, and patens of the hermitage of Franchard. A casket came last, tightly shut and very heavy.

"O, what fun!" he cried.

But when he looked back at the doctor, who had followed close behind and was silently observing, the words died from his lips. Desprez was once more the colour of ashes; his lip worked and trembled; a sort of bestial greed possessed him.

"This is childish," he said. "We lose precious time. Back to the inn, harness the trap, and bring it to yon bank. Run for your life, and remember—not one whisper. I stay here to watch."

Jean-Marie did as he was bid, though not without surprise. The noddy was brought round to the spot indicated; and the two gradually transported the treasure from its place of concealment to the boot below the driving-seat. Once it was all stored the doctor recovered his gaiety.

"I pay my grateful duties to the genius of this dell," he said. "Oh, for a live coal, a heifer, and a jar of country wine! I am in the vein for sacrifice, for a superb libation. Well, and why not? We are at Franchard. English pale ale is to be had—not classical, indeed, but excellent. Boy, we shall drink ale."

"But I thought it was so unwholesome," said Jean-Marie, "and very dear besides."

"Fiddle de-dee!" exclaimed the doctor gaily. "To the inn!"

And he stepped into the noddy, tossing his head, with an elastic, youthful air. The horse was turned, and in a few seconds they drew up beside the palings of the inn garden.

"Here." said Desprez—"here, near the stable, so that we may keep an eye upon things."

They tied the horse, and entered the garden, the doctor singing, now in fantastic high notes, now producing deep reverberations from his chest. He took a seat, rapped loudly on the table, assailed the waiter with witticisms; and when the bottle of Bass was at length produced, far more charged with gas than the most delirious champagne, he filled out a long glassful of froth and pushed it over to Jean-Marie. "Drink," he said; "drink deep."

"I would rather not," faltered the boy, true to his training.

"What?" thundered Desprez.

"I am afraid of it," said Jean-Marie; "my stomach——"

"Take it or leave it," interrupted Desprez fiercely; "but understand it once for all—there is nothing so contemptible as a precisian."

Here was a new lesson! The boy sat bemused, looking at the glass but not tasting it, while the doctor emptied and refilled his own, at first with clouded brow, but gradually yielding to the sun, the heady, prickling beverage, and his own predisposition to be happy.

"Once in a way," he said at last, by way of a concession to the boy's more rigourous attitude, "once in a way, and at so critical a moment, this ale is a nectar for the gods. The habit, indeed, is debasing; wine, the juice of the grape, is the true drink of the Frenchman, as I have often had occasion to point out; and I do not know that I can blame you for refusing this outlandish stimulant. You can have some wine and cakes. Is the bottle empty? Well, we will not be proud; we will have pity on your glass."

The beer being done, the doctor chafed bitterly while Jean-Marie finished his cakes. "I burn to be gone," he said, looking at his watch. "Good God, how slowly you eat!" And yet to eat slowly was his own particular prescription, the main secret of longevity!

His martyrdom, however, reached an end at last; the pair resumed their places in the buggy, and Desprez, leaning luxuriously back, announced his intention of proceeding to Fontainebleau.

"To Fontainebleau?" repeated Jean-Marie.

"My words are always measured," said the doctor. "On!"

The doctor was driven through the glades of paradise; the air, the light, the shining leaves, the very movements of the vehicle, seemed to fall in tune with his golden meditations; with his head thrown back, he dreamed a series of sunny visions, ale and pleasure dancing in his veins. At last he spoke.

"I shall telegraph for Casimir," he said. "Good Casimir! a fellow of the lower order of intelligence, Jean-Marie, distinctly not creative, not poetic; and yet he will repay your study; his fortune is vast, and is entirely due to his own exertions. He is the very fellow to help us to dispose of our trinkets, find us a suitable house in Paris, and manage the details of our installation. Admirable Casimir, one of my oldest comrades! It was on his advice, I may add, that I invested my little fortune in Turkish bonds; when we have added these spoils of the medieval church to our stake in the Mahometan empire, little boy, we shall positively roll among doubloons, positively roll! Beautiful forest," he cried, "farewell! Though called to other scenes, I will not forget thee. Thy name is graven in my heart. Under the influence of prosperity I become dithyrambic, Jean-Marie. Such is the impulse of the natural soul; such was the constitution of primeval man. And I—well, I will not refuse the credit—I have preserved my youth like a virginity; another, who should have led the same snoozing, countrified existence for these years, another had become rusted, become stereotyped; but I, I praise my happy constitution, retain the spring unbroken. Fresh opulence and a new sphere of duties find me unabated in ardour and only more mature by knowledge. For this prospective change, Jean-Marie—it may probably have shocked you. Tell me now, did it not strike you as an inconsistency? Confess—it is useless to dissemble—it pained you?"

"Yes," said the boy.

"You see," returned the doctor, with sublime fatuity, "I read your thoughts! Nor am I surprised—your education is not yet complete; the higher duties of men have not been yet presented to you fully. A hint—till we have leisure—must suffice. Now that I am once more in possession of a modest competence; now that I have so long prepared myself in silent meditation, it becomes my superior duty to proceed to Paris. My scientific training, my undoubted command of language, mark me out for the service of my country. Modesty in such a case would be a snare. If sin were a philosophical expression, I should call it sinful. A man must not deny his manifest abilities, for that is to evade his obligations. I must be up and doing; I must be no skulker in life's battle."

So he rattled on, copiously greasing the joint of his inconsistency with words; while the boy listened silently, his eyes fixed on the horse, his mind seething. It was all lost eloquence; no array of words could unsettle a belief of Jean-Marie's; and he drove into Fontainebleau filled with pity, horror, indignation, and despair.

In the town Jean-Marie was kept a fixture on the driving-seat to guard the treasure; while the doctor, with a singular, slightly tipsy airiness of manner, fluttered in and out of cafés, where he shook hands with garrison officers, and mixed an absinthe with the nicety of old experience; in and out of shops, from which he returned laden with costly fruits, real turtle, a magnificent piece of silk for his wife, a preposterous cane for himself, and a képi of the newest fashion for the boy; in and out of the telegraph office, whence he despatched his telegram, and where three hours later he received an answer promising a visit on the morrow; and generally pervaded Fontainebleau with the first fine aroma of his divine good-humour.

The sun was very low when they set forth again; the shadows of the forest trees extended across the broad white road that led them home; the penetrating odour of the evening wood had already arisen, like a cloud of incense, from that broad field of tree-tops; and even in the streets of the town, where the air had been baked all day between white walls, it came in whiffs and pulses, like a distant music. Half-way home, the last gold flicker vanished from a great oak upon the left; and when they came forth beyond the borders of the wood, the plain was already sunken in pearly grayness, and a great, pale moon came swinging skyward through the filmy poplars.

The doctor sang, the doctor whistled, the doctor talked. He spoke of the woods, and the wars, and the deposition of dew; he brightened and babbled of Paris; he soared into cloudy bombast on the glories of the political arena. All was to be changed; as the day departed, it took with it the vestiges of an outworn existence, and tomorrow's sun was to inaugurate the new. "Enough," he cried, "of this life of maceration!" His wife (still beautiful, or he was sadly partial) was to be no longer buried; she should now shine before society. Jean-Marie would find the world at his feet; the roads open to success, wealth, honour, and posthumous renown. "And oh, by the way," said he, "for God's sake keep your tongue quiet! You are, of course, a very silent fellow; it is a quality I gladly recognize in you—silence, golden silence! But this is a matter of gravity. No word must get abroad; none but the good Casimir is to be trusted; we shall probably dispose of the vessels in England."

"But are they not even ours?" the boy said, almost with a sob—it was the only time he had spoken.

"Ours in this sense, that they are nobody else's," replied the doctor. "But the State would have some claim. If they were stolen, for instance, we should be unable to demand their restitution; we should have no title; we should be unable even to communicate with the police. Such is the monstrous condition of the law.[1] It is a mere instance of what remains to be done, of the injustices that may yet be righted by an ardent, active, and philosophical deputy."

Jean-Marie put his faith in Madame Desprez; and as they drove forward down the road from Bourron, between the rustling poplars, he prayed in his teeth, and whipped up the horse to an unusual speed. Surely, as soon as they arrived, madame would assert her character, and bring this waking nightmare to an end.

Their entrance into Gretz was heralded and accompanied by a most furious barking; all the dogs in the village seemed to smell the treasure in the noddy. But there was no one in the street, save three lounging landscape-painters at Tentaillon's door. Jean-Marie opened the green gate and led in the horse and carriage; and almost at the same moment Madame Desprez came to the kitchen threshold with a lighted lantern; for the moon was not yet high enough to clear the garden walls.

"Close the gates, Jean-Marie!" cried the doctor, somewhat unsteadily alighting. "Anastasie, where is Aline?"

"She has gone to Montereau to see her parents," said madame.

"All is for the best!" exclaimed the doctor fervently. "Here, quick, come near to me; I do not wish to speak too loud," he continued. "Darling, we are wealthy!"

"Wealthy!" repeated the wife.

"I have found the treasure of Franchard," replied her husband. "See, here are the first fruits; a pineapple, a dress for my ever-beautiful—it will suit her—trust a husband's, trust a lover's, taste! Embrace me, darling! This grimy episode is over; the butterfly unfolds its painted wings. To-morrow Casimir will come; in a week we may be in Paris—happy at last! You shall have diamonds. Jean-Marie, take it out of the boot with religious care, and bring it piece by piece into the dining-room. We shall have plate at table! Darling, hasten and prepare this turtle; it will be a whet—it will be an addition to our meager ordinary. I myself will proceed to the cellar. We shall have a bottle of that little Beaujolais you like, and finish with the Hermitage; there are still three bottles left. Worthy wine for a worthy occasion."

"But, my husband; you put me in a whirl," she cried. "I do not comprehend."

"The turtle, my adored, the turtle!" cried the doctor; and he pushed her toward the kitchen, lantern and all.

Jean-Marie stood dumbfounded. He had pictured to himself a different scene—a more immediate protest, and his hope began to dwindle on the spot.

The doctor was everywhere, a little doubtful on his legs, perhaps, and now and then taking the wall with his shoulder; for it was long since he had tasted absinthe, and he was even then reflecting that the absinthe had been a misconception. Not that he regretted excess on such a glorious day, but he made a mental memorandum to beware; he must not, a second time, become the victim of a deleterious habit. He had his wine out of the cellar in a twinkling; he arranged the sacrificial vessels, some on the white tablecloth, some on the sideboard, still crusted with historic earth. He was in and out of the kitchen, plying Anastasie with vermouth, heating her with glimpses of the future, estimating their new wealth at ever larger figures; and before they sat down to supper, the lady's virtue had melted in the fire of his enthusiasm, her timidity had disappeared; she, too, had begun to speak disparagingly of the life at Gretz; and as she took her place and helped the soup, her eyes shone with the glitter of prospective diamonds.

All through the meal, she and the doctor made and unmade fairy plans. They bobbed and bowed and pledged each other. Their faces ran over with smiles; their eyes scattered sparkles, as they projected the doctor's political honours and the lady's drawing-room ovations.

"But you will not be a Red!" cried Anastasie.

"I am Left Center to the core," replied the doctor.

"Madame Gastein will present us—we

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[1] Let it be so, for my tale!

shall find ourselves forgotten," said the lady.

"Never," protested the doctor. "Beauty and talent leave a mark."

"I have positively forgotten how to dress," she sighed.

"Darling, you make me blush," cried he. "Yours has been a tragic marriage!"

"But your success—to see you appreciated, honoured, your name in all the papers, that will be more than pleasure—it will be heaven!" she cried.

"And once a week," said the doctor, archly scanning the syllables, "once a week—one good little game of baccarat?"

"Only once a week?" she questioned, threatening him with a finger.

"I swear it by my political honour," cried he.

"I spoil you," she said, and gave him her hand.

He covered it with kisses.

Jean-Marie escaped into the night. The moon swung high over Gretz. He went down to the garden end and sat on the jetty. The river ran by with eddies of oily silver, and a low, monotonous song. Faint veils of mist moved among the poplars on the farther side. The reeds were quietly nodding. A hundred times already had the boy sat, on such a night, and watched the streaming river with untroubled fancy. And this, perhaps, was to be the last. He was to leave this familiar hamlet, this green, rustling country, this bright and quiet stream; he was to pass into the great city; his dear lady mistress was to move bedizened into salons; his good, garrulous, kind-hearted master to become a brawling deputy; and both be lost forever to Jean-Marie and their better selves. He knew his own defects; he knew he must sink into less and less consideration in the turmoil of a city life; sink more and more from the child into the servant. And he began dimly to believe the doctor's prophecies of evil. He could see a change in both. His generous incredulity failed him for this once; a child must have perceived that the Hermitage had completed what the absinthe had begun. If this were the first day, what would be the last? "If necessary, wreck the train," thought he, remembering the doctor's parable. He looked round on the delightful scene; he drank deep of the charmed night air, laden with the scent of hay. "If necessary, wreck the train," he repeated. And he rose and returned to the house.

VI

A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION, IN TWO PARTS

The next morning there was a most unusual outcry in the doctor's house. The last thing before going to bed, the doctor had locked up some valuables in the dining-room cupboard; and behold, when he rose again, as he did about four o'clock, the cupboard had been broken open, the valuables in question had disappeared. Madame and Jean-Marie were summoned from their rooms, and appeared in hasty toilettes; they found the doctor raving, calling the heavens to witness and avenge his injury, pacing the room barefooted, with the tails of his nightshirt flirting as he turned.

"Gone!" he said: "the things are gone, the fortune gone! We are paupers once more. Boy! what do you know of this? Speak up, sir, speak up. Do you know of it? Where are they?" He had him by the arm, shaking him like a bag, and the boy's words, if he had any, were jolted forth in inarticulate murmurs. The doctor, with a revulsion from his own violence, set him down again. He observed Anastasie in tears. "Anastasie," he said, in quite an altered voice, "compose yourself, command your feelings. I would not have you give way to passion like the vulgar. This—this trifling accident must be lived down. Jean-Marie, bring me my smaller medicine chest. A gentle laxative is indicated."

And he dosed the family all round, leading the way himself with a double quantity. The wretched Anastasie, who had never been ill in the whole course of her existence, and whose soul recoiled from remedies, wept floods of tears as she sipped, and shuddered, and protested, and then was bullied and shouted at until she sipped again. As for Jean-Marie, he took his portion down with stoicism.

"I have given him a less amount," observed the doctor, "his youth protecting him against emotion. And now that we have thus parried any morbid consequences, let us reason."

"I am so cold," wailed Anastasie.

"Cold!" cried the doctor. "I give thanks to God that I am made of fierier material. Why, madame, a blow like this would set a frog into a transpiration. If you are cold, you can retire; and, by the way, you might throw me down my trousers. It is chilly for the legs."

"Oh, no!" protested Anastasie; "I will stay with you."

"Nay, madame, you shall not suffer for your devotion," said the doctor. "I will myself fetch you a shawl." And he went up-stairs and returned more fully clad and with an armful of wraps for the shivering Anastasie. "And now," he resumed, "to investigate this crime. Let us proceed by induction. Anastasie, do you know anything that can help us?" Anastasie knew nothing. "Or you, Jean-Marie?"

"Not I," replied the boy steadily.

"Good," returned the doctor. "We shall now turn our attention to the material evidences. (I was born to be a detective, I have the eye and the systematic spirit.) First, violence has been employed. The door was broken open; and it may be observed, in passing, that the lock was dear indeed at what I paid for it: a crow to pluck with Master Goguelat. Second, here is the instrument employed, one of our own table-knives, one of our best, my dear; which seems to indicate no preparation on the part of the gang—if gang it was. Thirdly, I observe that nothing has been removed except the Franchard dishes and the casket; our own silver has been minutely respected. This is wily; it shows intelligence, a knowledge of the code, a desire to avoid legal consequences. I argue from this fact that the gang numbers persons of respectability—outward, of course, and merely outward, as the robbery proves. But I argue, second, that we must have been observed at Franchard itself by some occult observer, and dogged throughout the day with a skill and patience that I venture to qualify as consummate. No ordinary man, no occasional criminal, would have shown himself capable of this combination. We have in our neighbourhood, it is far from improbable, a retired bandit of the highest order of intelligence."

"Good Heaven!" cried the horrified Anastasie. "Henri, how can you!"

"My cherished one, this is a process of induction," said the doctor. "If any of my steps are unsound, correct me. You are silent? Then do not, I beseech you, be so vulgarly illogical as to revolt from my conclusion. We have now arrived," he resumed, "at some idea of the composition of the gang—for I incline to the hypothesis of more than one—and we now leave this room, which can disclose no more, and turn our attention to the court and garden. (Jean-Marie, I trust you are observantly following my various steps; this is an excellent piece of education for you.) Come with me to the door. No steps on the court; it is unfortunate our court should be paved. On what small matters hangs the destiny of these delicate investigations! Hey! What have we here? I have led you to the very spot," he said, standing grandly backward and indicating the green gate.

"An escalade, as you can now see for yourselves, has taken place."

Sure enough, the green paint was in several places scratched and broken; and one of the panels preserved the print of a nailed shoe. The foot had slipped, however, and it was difficult to estimate the size of the shoe, and impossible to distinguish the pattern of the nails.

"The whole robbery," concluded the doctor, "step by step, has been reconstituted. Inductive science can no further go."

"It is wonderful," said his wife. "You should indeed have been a detective, Henri. I had no idea of your talents."

"My dear," replied Desprez, condescendingly, "a man of scientific imagination combines the lesser faculties; he is a detective just as he is a publicist or a general; these are but local applications of his special talent. But now," he continued, "would you have me go further? Would you have me lay my finger on the culprits—or rather, for I cannot promise quite so much, point out to you the very house where they consort? It may be a satisfaction, at least it is all we are likely to get, since we are denied the remedy of law. I reach the further stage in this way. In order to fill my outline of the robbery, I require a man likely to be in the forest idling, I require a man of education, I require a man superior to considerations of morality. The three requisites all center in Tentaillon's boarders. They are painters, therefore they are continually lounging in the forest. They are painters, therefore they are not unlikely to have some smattering of education. Lastly, because they are painters, they are probably immoral. And this I prove in two ways. First, painting is an art which merely addresses the eye; it does not in any particular exercise the moral sense. And second, painting, in common with all the other arts, implies the dangerous quality of imagination. A man of imagination is never moral; he outsoars literal demarcations and reviews life under too many shifting lights to rest content with the invidious distinctions of the law!"

"But you always say—at least, so I understood you"—said madame, "that these lads display no imagination whatever."

"My dear, they displayed imagination, and of a very fantastic order, too," returned the doctor, "when they embraced their beggarly profession. Besides—and this is an argument exactly suited to your intellectual level—many of them are English and American. Where else should we expect to find a thief?—And now you had better get your coffee. Because we have lost a treasure, there is no reason for starving. For my part, I shall break my fast with white wine. I feel unaccountably heated and thirsty to-day. I can only attribute it to the shock of the discovery. And yet, you will bear me out, I supported the emotion nobly."

The doctor had now talked himself back into an admirable humour; and as he sat in the arbour and slowly imbibed a large allowance of white wine and picked a little bread and cheese with no very impetuous appetite, if a third of his meditations ran upon the missing treasure, the other two-thirds were more pleasingly busied in the retrospect of his detective skill.

About eleven Casimir arrived; he had caught an early train to Fontainebleau, and driven over to save time; and now his cab was stabled at Tentaillon's, and he remarked, studying his watch, that he could spare an hour and a half. He was much the man of business, decisively spoken, given to frowning in an intellectual manner. Anastasie's born brother, he did not waste much sentiment on the lady, gave her an English family kiss, and demanded a meal without delay.

"You can tell me your story while we eat," he observed. "Anything good to-day, Stasie?"

He was promised something good. The trio sat down to table in the arbour, Jean-Marie waiting as well as eating, and the doctor recounted what had happened in his richest narrative manner. Casimir heard it with explosions of laughter.

"What a streak of luck for you, my good brother," he observed, when the tale was over. "If you had gone to Paris, you would have played dick-duck-drake with the whole consignment in three months. Your own would have followed; and you would have come to me in a procession like the last time. But I give you warning—Stasie may weep and Henri ratiocinate—it will not serve you twice. Your next collapse will be fatal. I thought I had told you so, Stasie? Hey? No sense?"

The doctor winced and looked furtively at Jean-Marie; but the boy seemed apathetic.

"And then again," broke out Casimir, "what children you are—vicious children, my faith! How could you tell the value of this trash? It might have been worth nothing, or next door."

"Pardon me," said the doctor. "You have your usual flow of spirits, I perceive, but even less than your usual deliberation. I am not entirely ignorant of these matters."

"Not entirely ignorant of anything ever I heard of," interrupted Casimir, bowing, and raising his glass with a sort of pert politeness.

"At least," resumed the doctor, "I gave my mind to the subject—that you may be willing to believe—and I estimated that our capital would be doubled." And he described the nature of the find.

"My word of honour!" said Casimir, "I half believe you! But much would depend on the quality of the gold."

"The quality, my dear Casimir, was—" And the doctor, in default of language, kissed his finger-tips.

"I would not take your word for it, my good friend," retorted the man of business. "You are a man of very rosy views. But this robbery," he continued—"this robbery is an odd thing. Of course I pass over your nonsense about gangs and landscape-painters. For me, that is a dream. Who was in the house last night?"

"None but ourselves," replied the doctor.

"And this young gentleman?" asked Casimir, jerking a nod in the direction of Jean-Marie.

"He too"—the doctor bowed.

"Well; and if it is a fair question, who is he?" pursued the brother-in-law.

"Jean-Marie," answered the doctor, "combines the functions of a son and stable-boy. He began as the latter, but he rose rapidly to the more honourable rank in our affections. He is, I may say, the greatest comfort in our lives."

"Ha!" said Casimir. "And previous to becoming one of you?"

"Jean-Marie has lived a remarkable existence; his experience has been eminently formative," replied Desprez. "If I had to choose an education for my son, I should have chosen such another. Beginning life with mountebanks and thieves, passing onward to the society and friendship of philosophers, he may be said to have skimmed the volume of human life."

"Thieves?" repeated the brother-in-law, with a meditative air.

The doctor could have bitten his tongue out. He foresaw what was coming, and prepared his mind for a vigourous defence.

"Did you ever steal, yourself?" asked Casimir, turning suddenly on Jean-Marie, and for the first time employing a single eyeglass which hung round his neck.

"Yes, sir," replied the boy, with a deep blush.

Casimir turned to the others with pursed lips, and nodded to them meaningly. "Hey?" said he; "how is that?"

"Jean-Marie is a teller of the truth," returned the doctor, throwing out his bust.

"He has never told a lie," added madame. "He is the best of boys."

"Never told a lie, has he not?" reflected Casimir. "Strange, very strange. Give me your attention, my young friend," he continued. "You knew about this treasure?"

"He helped to bring it home," interposed the doctor.

"Desprez, I ask you nothing but to hold your tongue," returned Casimir. "I mean to question this stable-boy of yours; and if you are so certain of his innocence, you can afford to let him answer for himself. Now, sir," he resumed, pointing his eyeglass straight at Jean-Marie. "You knew it could be stolen with impunity? You knew you could not be prosecuted? Come! Did you, or did you not?"

"I did," answered Jean-Marie, in a miserable whisper. He sat there changing colour like a revolving pharos, twisting his fingers hysterically, swallowing air, the picture of guilt.

"You knew where it was put?" resumed the inquisitor.

"Yes," from Jean-Marie.

"You say you have been a thief before," continued Casimir. "Now how am I to know that you are not one still? I suppose you could climb the green gate?"

"Yes," still lower, from the culprit.

"Well, then, it was you who stole these things. You know it, and you dare not deny it. Look me in the face! Raise your sneak's eyes, and answer!"

But in place of anything of that sort Jean-Marie broke into a dismal howl and fled from the arbour. Anastasie, as she pursued to capture and reassure the victim, found time to send one Parthian arrow—"Casimir, you are a brute!"

"My brother," said Desprez, with the greatest dignity, "you take upon yourself a license——"

"Desprez," interrupted Casimir, "for Heaven's sake be a man of the world. You telegraph me to leave my business and come down here on yours. I come, I ask the business, you say 'Find me this thief!' Well, I find him; I say 'There he is!' You need not like it, but you have no manner of right to take offense."

"Well," returned the doctor, "I grant that; I will even thank you for your mistaken zeal. But your hypothesis was so extravagantly monstrous——"

"Look here," interrupted Casimir; "was it you or Stasie?"

"Certainly not," answered the doctor.

"Very well; then it was the boy. Say no more about it," said the brother-in-law, and he produced his cigar-case.

"I will say this much more," returned Desprez: "if that boy came and told me so himself, I should not believe him; and if I did believe him, so implicit is my trust, I should conclude that he had acted for the best."

"Well, well," said Casimir, indulgently. "Have you a light? I must be going. And by the way, I wish you would let me sell your Turks for you. I always told you, it meant smash. I tell you so again. Indeed, it was partly that that brought me down. You never acknowledged my letters—a most unpardonable habit."

"My good brother," replied the doctor blandly, "I have never denied your ability in business; but I can perceive your limitations."

"Egad, my friend, I can return the compliment," observed the man of business. "Your limitation is to be downright irrational."

"Observe the relative position," returned the doctor with a smile. "It is your attitude to believe through thick and thin in one man's judgment—your own. I follow the same opinion, but critically and with open eyes. Which is the more irrational?—I leave it to yourself."

"O, my dear fellow!" cried Casimir, "stick to your Turks, stick to your stable-boy, go to the devil in general in your own way and be done with it. But don't ratiocinate with me—I cannot bear it. And so, ta-ta. I might as well have stayed away for any good I've done. Say good-bye from me to Stasie, and to the sullen hang-dog of a stable-boy, if you insist on it; I'm off."

And Casimir departed. The doctor, that night, dissected his character before Anastasie. "One thing, my beautiful," he said, "he has learned one thing from his lifelong acquaintance with your husband: the word *ratiocinate*. It shines in his vocabulary, like a jewel in a muck-heap. And, even so, he continually misapplies it. For you must have observed he uses it as a sort of taunt, in the case of *to ergotise*, implying, as it were—the poor, dear fellow!—a vein of sophistry. As for his cruelty to Jean-Marie, it must be forgiven him—it is not his nature, it is the nature of his life. A man who deals with money, my dear, is a man lost."

With Jean-Marie the process of reconciliation had been somewhat slow. At first he was inconsolable, insisted on leaving the family, went from paroxysm to paroxysm of tears; and it was only after Anastasie had been closeted for an hour with him, alone, that she came forth, sought out the doctor, and, with tears in her eyes, acquainted that gentleman with what had passed.

"At first, my husband, he would hear of nothing," she said. "Imagine! if he had left us! what would the treasure be to that? Horrible treasure, it has brought all this about! At last, after he has sobbed his very heart out, he agrees to stay on a condition—we are not to mention this matter, this infamous suspicion, not even to mention the robbery. On that agreement only, the poor, cruel boy will consent to remain among his friends."

"But this inhibition," said the doctor, "this embargo—it cannot possibly apply to me?"

"To all of us," Anastasie assured him.

"My cherished one," Desprez protested, "you must have misunderstood. It cannot apply to me. He would naturally come to me."

"Henri," she said, "it does; I swear to you, it does."

"This is a painful, a very painful circumstance," the doctor said, looking a little black. "I cannot affect, Anastasie, to be anything but justly wounded. I feel this, I feel it, my wife, acutely."

"I knew you would," she said. "But if you had seen his distress! We must make allowances, we must sacrifice our feelings."

"I trust, my dear, you have never found me averse to sacrifices," returned the doctor very stiffly.

"And you will let me go and tell him that you have agreed? It will be like your noble nature," she cried.

So it would, he perceived—it would be like his noble nature! Up jumped his spirits, triumphant at the thought. "Go, darling," he said nobly, "reassure him. The subject is buried; more—I make an effort, I have accustomed my will to these exertions—and it is forgotten."

A little after, but still with swollen eyes and looking mortally sheepish, Jean-Marie reappeared and went ostentatiously about his business. He was the only unhappy member of the party that sat down that night to supper. As for the doctor, he was radiant. He thus sang the requiem of the treasure:

"This has been, on the whole, a most amusing episode," he said. "We are not a penny the worse—nay, we are immensely gainers. Our philosophy has been exercised; some of the turtle is still left—the most wholesome of delicacies; I have my staff, Anastasie has her new dress, Jean-Marie is the proud possessor of a fashionable képi. Besides, we had a glass of Hermitage last night; the glow still suffuses my memory. I was growing positively niggardly with that Hermitage; positively niggardly. Let me take the hint: we had one bottle to celebrate the appearance of our visionary fortune; let us have a second to console us for its occultation. The third I hereby dedicate to Jean-Marie's wedding breakfast."

VII

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF DESPREZ

The doctor's house has not yet received the compliment of a description, and it is now high time that the omission were supplied, for the house is itself an actor in the story, and one whose part is nearly at an end. Two storeys in height, walls of a warm yellow, tiles of an ancient ruddy brown diversified with moss and lichen, it stood with one wall to the street in the angle of the doctor's property. It was roomy, draughty, and inconvenient. The large rafters were here and there engraven with rude marks and patterns; the handrail of the stair was carved in countrified arabesque; a stout timber pillar, which did duty to support the dining-room roof, bore mysterious characters on its darker side, runes, according to the doctor; nor did he fail, when he ran over the legendary history of the house and its possessors, to dwell upon the Scandinavian scholar who had left them. Floors, doors, and rafters made a great variety of angles; every room had a particular inclination; the gable had tilted toward the garden, after the manner of a leaning tower, and one of the former proprietors had buttressed the building from that side with a great strut of wood, like the derrick of a crane. Altogether, it had many marks of ruin; it was a house for the rats to desert; and nothing but its excellent brightness—the window-glass polished and shining, the paint well scoured, the brasses radiant, the very prop all wreathed about with climbing flowers—nothing but its air of a well-tended, smiling veteran, sitting, crutch and all, in the sunny corner of a garden, marked it as a house for comfortable people to inhabit. In poor or idle management it would soon have hurried into the blackguard stages of decay. As it was, the whole family loved it, and the doctor was never better inspired than when he narrated its imaginary story and drew the character of its successive masters, from the Hebrew merchant who had re-edified its walls after the sack of the town, and past the mysterious engraver of the runes, down to the long-headed, dirty-handed boor from whom he had himself acquired it at a ruinous expense. As for any alarm about its security, the idea had never presented itself. What had stood four centuries might well endure a little longer.

Indeed, in this particular winter, after the finding and losing of the treasure, the Desprez had an anxiety of a very different order, and one which lay nearer their hearts. Jean-Marie was plainly not himself. He had fits of hectic activity, when he made unusual exertions to please, spoke more and faster, and redoubled in attention to his lessons. But these were interrupted by spells of melancholia and brooding silence, when the boy was little better than unbearable.

"Silence," the doctor moralized—"you see, Anastasie, what comes of silence. Had the boy properly unbosomed himself, the little disappointment about the treasure, the little annoyance about Casimir's incivility, would long ago have been forgotten. As it is, they prey upon him like a disease. He loses flesh, his appetite is variable, and, on the whole, impaired. I keep him on the strictest regimen, I exhibit the most powerful tonics; both in vain."

"Don't you think you drug him too much?" asked madame, with an irrepressible shudder.

"Drug?" cried the doctor; "I drug? Anastasie, you are mad!"

Time went on, and the boy's health still slowly declined. The doctor blamed the weather, which was cold and boisterous. He called in his *confrère* from Bourron, took a fancy for him, magnified his capacity, and was pretty soon under treatment himself—it scarcely appeared for what complaint. He and Jean-Marie had each medicine to take at different periods of the day. The doctor used to lie in wait for the exact moment, watch in hand. "There is nothing like regularity," he would say, fill out the doses, and dilate on the virtues of the draught; and if the boy seemed none the better, the doctor was not at all the worse.

Gunpowder Day, the boy was particularly low. It was scowling, squally weather. Huge broken companies of cloud sailed swiftly overhead; raking gleams of sunlight swept the village, and were followed by intervals of darkness and white, flying rain. At times the wind lifted up its voice and bellowed. The trees were all scourging themselves along the meadows, the last leaves flying like dust.

The doctor, between the boy and the weather, was in his element; he had a theory to prove. He sat with his watch out and a barometer in front of him, waiting for the squalls and noting their effect upon the human pulse. "For the true philosopher," he remarked delightedly, "every fact in nature is a toy." A letter came to him; but, as its arrival coincided with the approach of another gust, he merely crammed it into his pocket, gave the time to Jean-Marie, and the next moment they were both counting their pulses as if for a wager.

At nightfall the wind rose into a tempest. It besieged the hamlet, apparently from every side, as if with batteries of cannon; the houses shook and groaned; live coals were blown upon the floor. The uproar and terror of the night kept people long awake, sitting with pallid faces giving ear.

It was twelve before the Desprez family retired. By half-past one, when the storm was already somewhat past its height, the doctor was awakened from a troubled slumber, and sat up. A noise still rang in his ears, but whether of this world or the world of dreams he was not certain. Another clap of wind followed. It was accompanied by a sickening movement of the whole house, and in the subsequent lull Desprez could hear the tiles pouring like a cataract into the loft above his head. He plucked Anastasie bodily out of bed.

"Run!" he cried, thrusting some wearing apparel into her hands; "the house is falling! To the garden!"

She did not pause to be twice bidden, she was down the stair in an instant. She had never before suspected herself of such activity. The doctor meanwhile, with the speed of a piece of pantomime business, and undeterred by broken shins, proceeded to rout out Jean-Marie, tore Aline from her virgin slumbers, seized her by the hand, and tumbled down-stairs and into the garden, with the girl tumbling behind him, still not half awake.

The fugitives rendezvous'd in the arbour by some common instinct. Then came a bull's-eye flash of struggling moonshine, which disclosed their four figures standing huddled from the wind in a raffle of flying drapery, and not without a considerable need for more. At the humiliating spectacle Anastasie clutched her nightdress desperately about her and burst loudly into tears. The doctor flew to console her; but she elbowed him away. She suspected everybody of being the general public, and thought the darkness was alive with eyes.

Another gleam and another violent gust arrived together; the house was seen to rock on its foundation, and, just as the light was once more eclipsed, a crash which triumphed over the shouting of the wind announced its fall, and for a moment the whole garden was alive with skipping tiles and brickbats. One such missile grazed the doctor's ear; another descended on the bare foot of Aline, who instantly made night hideous with her shrieks.

By this time the hamlet was alarmed, lights flashed from the windows, hails reached the party, and the doctor answered, nobly contending against Aline and the tempest. But this prospect of help only awakened Anastasie to a more active stage of terror.

"Henri, people will be coming," she screamed in her husband's ear.

"I trust so," he replied.

"They cannot. I would rather die," she wailed.

"My dear," said the doctor reprovingly, "you are excited. I gave you some clothes. What have you done with them?"

"Oh, I don't know—I must have thrown them away! Where are they?" she sobbed.

Desprez groped about in the darkness. "Admirable!" he remarked; "my gray velveteen trousers! This will exactly meet your necessities."

"Give them to me!" she cried fiercely; but as soon as she had them in her hands her mood appeared to alter—she stood silent for a moment, and then pressed the garment back upon the doctor. "Give it to Aline," she said—"poor girl."

"Nonsense!" said the doctor. "Aline does not know what she is about. Aline is beside herself with terror; and at any rate, she is a peasant. Now I am really concerned at this exposure for a person of your housekeeping habits; my solicitude and your fantastic modesty both point to the same remedy—the pantaloons." He held them ready.

"It is impossible. You do not understand," she said with dignity.

By this time rescue was at hand. It had been found impracticable to enter by the street, for the gate was blocked with masonry, and the nodding ruin still threatened further avalanches. But between the doctor's garden and the one on the right hand there was that very picturesque contrivance—a common wall; the door on the Desprez' side had chanced to be unbolted, and now, through the arched aperture a man's bearded face and an arm supporting a lantern were introduced into the world of windy darkness, where Anastasie concealed her woes. The light struck here and there among the tossing apple boughs, it glinted on the grass; but the lantern and the glowing face became the center of the world. Anastasie crouched back from the intrusion.

"This way!" shouted the man. "Are you all safe?"

Aline, still screaming, ran to the newcomer, and was presently hauled headforemost through the wall.

"Now, Anastasie, come on; it is your turn," said the husband.

"I cannot," she replied.

"Are we all to die of exposure, madame?" thundered Dr. Desprez.

"You can go!" she cried. "Oh, go, go away! I can stay here; I am quite warm."

The doctor took her by the shoulders with an oath.

"Stop!" she screamed. "I will put them on."

She took the detested lendings in her hand once more; but her repulsion was stronger than shame. "Never!" she cried, shuddering, and flung them far away into the night.

Next moment the doctor had whirled her to the wall. The man was there and the lantern; Anastasie closed her eyes and appeared to herself to be about to die. How she was transported through the arch she knew not; but once on the other side she was received by the neighbour's wife, and enveloped in a friendly blanket.

Beds were made ready for the two women, clothes of very various sizes for the doctor and Jean-Marie; and for the remainder of the night, while madame dozed in and out on the borderland of hysterics, her husband sat beside the fire and held forth to the admiring neighbours. He showed them, at length, the causes of the accident; for years, he explained, the fall had been impending; one sign had followed another, the joints had opened, the plaster had cracked, the old walls bowed inward; last, not three weeks ago, the cellar door had begun to work with difficulty in its grooves. "The cellar!" he said, gravely shaking his head over a glass of mulled wine. "That reminds me of my poor vintages. By a manifest providence the Hermitage was nearly at an end. One bottle—I lose but one bottle of that incomparable wine. It had been set apart against Jean-Marie's wedding. Well, I must lay down some more; it will be an interest in life. I am, however, a man somewhat advanced in years. My great work is now buried in the fall of my humble roof; it will never be completed—my name will have been writ in water. And yet you find me calm—I would say cheerful. Can your priest do more?"

By the first glimpse of day, the party sallied forth from the fireside into the street. The wind had fallen, but still charioted a world of troubled clouds; the air bit like frost; and the party, as they stood about the ruins in the rainy twilight of the morning, beat upon their breasts and blew into their hands for warmth. The house had entirely fallen, the walls outward, the roof in; it was a mere heap of rubbish, with here and there a forlorn spear of broken rafter. A sentinel was placed over the ruins to protect the property, and the party adjourned to Tentaillon's to break their fast at the doctor's expense. The bottle circulated somewhat freely; and before they left the table it had begun to snow.

For three days the snow continued to fall, and the ruins, covered with tarpaulin and watched by sentries, were left undisturbed. The Desprez' meanwhile had taken up their abode at Tentaillon's. Madame spent her time in the kitchen, concocting little delicacies, with the admiring aid of Madame Tentaillon, or sitting by the fire in thoughtful abstraction. The fall of the house affected her wonderfully little; that blow had been parried by another; and in her mind she was continually fighting over again the battle of the trousers. Had she done right? Had she done wrong? And now she would applaud her determination; and anon, with a horrid flush of unavailing penitence, she would regret the trousers. No juncture in her life had so much exercised her judgment. In the meantime, the doctor had become vastly pleased with his situation. Two of the summer boarders still lingered behind the rest, prisoners for lack of a remittance; they were both English, but one of them spoke French pretty fluently, and was, besides, a humourous, agile-minded fellow, with whom the doctor could reason by the hour, secure of comprehension. Many were the glasses they emptied, many the topics they discussed.

"Anastasie," the doctor said on the third morning, "take an example from your husband, from Jean-Marie. The excitement has done more for the boy than all my tonics, he takes his turn as sentry with positive gusto. As for me, you behold me. I have made friends with the Egyptians; and my Pharaoh is, I swear it, a most agreeable companion. You alone are hipped. About a house—a few dresses? What are they in comparison to the 'Pharmacopœia'—the labour of years lying buried below stones and sticks in this depressing hamlet? The snow falls; I shake it from my cloak! Imitate me. Our income will be impaired, I grant it, since we must rebuild; but moderation, patience, and philosophy will gather about the hearth. In the meanwhile, the Tentaillons are obliging; the table, with your additions, will pass; only the wine is execrable—well, I shall send for some today. My Pharaoh will be gratified to drink a decent glass; aha! and I shall see if he possesses that acme of organization—a palate. If he has a palate, he is perfect."

"Henri," she said, shaking her head, "you are a man; you cannot understand my feelings; no woman could shake off the memory of so public a humiliation."

The doctor could not restrain a titter. "Pardon me, darling," he said; "but really, to the philosphical intelligence, the incident appears so small a trifle. You looked extremely well——"

"Henri!" she cried.

"Well, well, I will say no more," he replied. "Though, to be sure, if you had consented to indue— *À propos*," he broke off, "and my trousers! They are lying in the snow—my favourite trousers!" And he dashed in quest of Jean-Marie.

Two hours afterwards the boy returned to the inn with a spade under one arm and a curious sop of clothing under the other.

The doctor ruefully took it in his hands. "They have been!" he said. "Their tense is past. Excellent pantaloons, you are no more! Stay! something in the pocket," and he produced a piece of paper. "A letter! ay, now I mind me; it was received on the morning of the gale, when I was abosrbed in delicate investigations. It is still legible. From poor, dear Casimir! It is as well," he chuckled, "that I have educated him to patience. Poor Casimir and his correspondence—his infinitesimal, timourous, idiotic correspondence!"

He had by this time cautiously unfolded the wet letter; but as he bent himself to decipher the writing, a cloud descended on his brow.

"*Bigre!*" he cried, with a galvanic start.

And then the letter was whipped into the fire, and the doctor's cap was on his head in the turn of a hand.

"Ten minutes! I can catch it, if I run," he cried. "It is always late. I go to Paris. I shall telegraph."

"Henri! what is wrong?" cried his wife.

"Ottoman Bonds!" came from the disappearing doctor; and Anastasie and Jean-Marie were left face to face with the wet trousers. Desprez had gone to Paris, for the second time in seven years; he had gone to Paris with a pair of wooden shoes, a knitted spencer, a black blouse, a country nightcap, and twenty francs in his pocket. The fall of the house was but a secondary marvel; the whole world might have fallen and scarce left his family more petrified.

VIII

THE WAGES OF PHILOSOPHY

On the morning of the next day, the doctor, a mere specter of himself, was brought back in the custody of Casimir. They found Anastasie and the boy sitting together by the fire; and Desprez, who had exchanged his toilette for a ready-made rig-out of poor materials, waved his hand as he entered, and sank speechless on the nearest chair. Madame turned direct to Casimir.

"What is wrong?" she cried.

"Well," replied Casimir, "what have I told you all along? It has come. It is a clean shave, this time; so you may as well bear up and make the best of it. House down, too, eh? Bad luck, upon my soul."

"Are we—are we—ruined?" she gasped.

The doctor stretched out his arms to her. "Ruined," he replied, "you are ruined by your sinister husband."

Casimir observed the consequent embrace through his eyeglass; then he turned to Jean-Marie. "You hear?" he said. "They are ruined; no more pickings, no more house, no more fat cutlets. It strikes me, my friend, that you had best be packing; the present speculation is about worked out." And he nodded to him meaningly.

"Never!" cried Desprez, springing up. "Jean-Marie, if you prefer to leave me, now that I am poor, you can go; you shall receive your hundred francs, if so much remains to me. But if you will consent to stay"—the doctor wept a little—"Casimir offers me a place—as clerk," he resumed. "The emoluments are slender, but they will be enough for three. It is too much already to have lost my fortune; must I lose my son?"

Jean-Marie sobbed bitterly, but without a word.

"I don't like boys who cry," observed Casimir. "This one is always crying. Here! you clear out of this for a little; I have business with your master and mistress, and these domestic feelings may be settled after I am gone. March!" and he held the door open.

Jean-Marie slunk out, like a detected thief.

By twelve they were all at table but Jean-Marie.

"Hey?" said Casimir. "Gone, you see. Took the hint at once."

"I do not, I confess," said Desprez, "I do not seek to excuse his absence. It speaks of want of heart that disappoints me sorely."

"Want of manners," corrected Casimir. "Heart, he never had. Why, Desprez, for a clever fellow, you are the most gullible mortal in creation. Your ignorance of human nature and human business is beyond belief. You are swindled by heathen Turks, swindled by vagabond children, swindled right and left, up-stairs and down-stairs. I think it must be your imagination. I thank my stars I have none."

"Pardon me," replied Desprez, still humbly, but with a return of spirit at sight of a distinction to be drawn; "pardon me, Casimir. You possess, even to an eminent degree, the commercial imagination. It was the lack of that in me—it appears it is my weak point—that has led to these repeated shocks. By the commercial imagination the financier forecasts the destiny of his investments, marks the falling house——"

"Egad," interrupted Casimir, "our friend the stable-boy appears to have his share of it."

The doctor was silenced; and the meal was continued and finished principally to the tune of the brother-in-law's not very consolatory conversation. He entirely ignored the two young English painters, turning a blind eyeglass to their salutations, and continuing his remarks as if he were alone in the bosom of his family; and with every second word he ripped another stitch out of the air balloon of Desprez's vanity. By the time coffee was over the poor doctor was as limp as a napkin.

"Let us go and see the ruins," said Casimir.

They strolled forth into the street. The fall of the house, like the loss of a front tooth, had quite transformed the village. Through the gap the eye commanded a great stretch of open snowy country, and the place shrank in comparison. It was like a room with an open door. The sentinel stood by the green gate, looking very red and cold, but he had a pleasant word for the doctor and his wealthy kinsman.

Casimir looked at the mound of ruins, he tried the quality of the tarpaulin. "H'm," he said, "I hope the cellar arch has stood. If it has, my good brother, I will give you a good price for the wines."

"We shall start digging to-morrow," said the sentry. "There is no more fear of snow."

"My friend," returned Casimir sententiously, "you had better wait till you get paid."

The doctor winced, and began dragging his offensive brother-in-law toward Tentaillon's. In the house there would be fewer auditors, and these already in the secret of his fall.

"Hullo," cried Casimir, "there goes the stable-boy with his luggage; no, egad, he is taking it into the inn."

And sure enough, Jean-Marie was seen to cross the snowy street and enter Tentaillon's, staggering under a large hamper.

The doctor stopped with a sudden, wild hope.

"What can he have?" he said. "Let us go and see." And he hurried on.

"His luggage, to be sure," answered Casimir. "He is on the move—thanks to the commercial imagination."

"I have not seen that hamper for—for ever so long," remarked the doctor.

"Nor will you see it much longer," chuckled Casimir; "unless, indeed, we interfere. And by the way, I insist on an examination."

"You will not require," said Desprez, positively with a sob; and, casting a moist, triumphant glance at Casimir, he began to run.

"What the devil is up with him, I wonder?" Casimir reflected; and then, curiosity taking the upper hand, he followed the doctor's example and took to his heels.

The hamper was so heavy and large, and Jean-Marie himself so little and so weary, that it had taken him a great while to bundle it up-stairs to the Desprez' private room; and he had just set it down on the floor in front of Anastasie, when the doctor arrived, and was closely followed by the man of business. Boy and hamper were both in a most sorry plight; for the one had passed four months underground in a certain cave on the way to Achères, and the other had run about five miles, as hard as his legs would carry him, half that distance under a staggering weight.

"Jean-Marie," cried the doctor, in a voice that was only too seraphic to be called hysterical, "is it—? It is!" he cried. "O, my son, my son!" And he sat down upon the hamper and sobbed like a little child.

"You will not go to Paris, now," said Jean-Marie sheepishly.

"Casimir," said Desprez, raising his wet face, "do you see that boy, that angel boy? he is the thief; he took the treasure from a man unfit to be entrusted with its use; he brings it back to me when I am sobered and humbled. These, Casimir, are the Fruits of my Teaching, and this moment is the Reward of my Life."

"*Tiens*," said Casimir.

The body is but an animal to be ridden by the heart. MOHAMMED AL-GHAZZALI.

"Say what you will, at the end of life the important thing is to have lived."
HENRY HARLAND.

"Virtues in a woman, Nancy, are like her complexion; she must keep them soft and pretty. Mine have become as homely and harsh as—I am. And do you not know, my dear, how many times I have regretted my principle?" CORRA HARRIS.

The Face that Launched A Thousand Ships

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?—
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss:—
Her lips suck forth my soul: see where it flees!—
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena. CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE.

We do not know if there was ever a real Helen of Sparta and of Troy. Perhaps she was but an imagined moon goddess, as is insisted by those laborious German scholars, to some of whom solar myths and moon-goddesses are as King Charles's head to Mr. Dick. No matter.

Certain it is she has become a symbol of that breathless perfection of feminine beauty which ravishes the heart and understanding, which has outweighed honour, and love of country and even desire of life; which has inspired men to the full human gamut, from murder to poetry.

Certain too, that if she did not live centuries before Homer, she lives to-day, in the deathless verse her resistless mental image has drawn from the surcharged feelings of many poets in many lands.

Here are some fragments of her story and her praise, gathered from three thousand years of literature. Clearly she was one born to be carried off, for she was but ten when she aroused a tempest in the breast of fifty-year-old Theseus, who had "made Athens be inhabited," and united Attica as a single state with his own city at the head. H. W. L.

THE FIRST WARS OVER HELEN

Theseus was now fifty years old . . . when he carried off Helen, who was yet too young to be married. Some writers, to take away this accusation of one of the greatest crimes laid to his charge, say that he did not steal away Helen himself, but that Idas and Lynceus were the ravishers, who brought her to him and committed her to his charge and that, therefore, he refused to restore her at the demand of Castor and Pollux. . . . But the most probable account and that which has most witnesses on its side is this: Theseus and Peirithoüs went both together to Sparta, and, having seized the girl as she was dancing in the temple of Diana, fled away with her. There were presently men in arms sent to pursue, but they followed no further than to Tegea; and Theseus and Peirithoüs, being now out of danger, made an agreement between themselves that he to whom the lot should fall should have Helen to his wife. . . . The lot fell to Theseus, who conveyed her to Aphidnæ, not being yet marriageable, and delivered her to one of his allies, called Aphidnus, and having sent his mother Æthra after to take care of her, desired him to keep them so secretly that none might know where they were. . . . At the first approach of Castor and Pollux, they committed no acts of hostility, but peaceably demanded their sister; but the Athenians returning answer that they neither had her nor knew where she was, they prepared to assault the city, when Academus, having in some way found it out, disclosed to them that she was secretly kept at Aphidnæ. For which reason he was both highly honoured during his life by Castor and Pollux; and the Lacedæmonians, when often in aftertimes they made incursions into Attica and destroyed all the country round about, spared the Academy for the sake of Academus. PLUTARCH.

As the rising Dawn shows forth her fairer face than thine, O Night, or as the bright Spring, when Winter relaxes his hold, even so amongst us still she shone, the golden Helen.
THEOCRITUS.

THE CHILD OF HELEN

Near the sanctuary of the Lords is a sanctuary of Eilithyia. It was dedicated to Helen when she was being taken to Lacedæmon, after Aphidnæ had been captured by the Dioscuri [Castor and Pollux] in the absence of Theseus, who had gone off with Peirithoüs to Thesprotis. For they say that she was with child at the time, and that she was brought to bed in Argos and founded the sanctuary of Eilithyia [goddess of childbirth]. The girl of whom she was delivered she gave to Clytemnestra, who was by this time the wife of Agamemnon. Helen herself afterward married Menelaus. In reference to this episode, the poets Euphorion the Chalcidian and Alexander the Pleuronian, as well as Stesichorus the Himeræan before them, agree with the Argives in representing Iphegeneia as the daughter of Theseus.
PAUSANIAS.

But this Greek Helen, having little care
For Hebrew statutes, filled with courage rare
In face of God's commands. RONSARD.

THE PORTRAIT, ALAS! HAS DISAPPEARED FROM THE WORLD

Zeuxis, the celebrated painter of Heraclea, painted a picture of Helen. Nicomachus, another artist, was struck with admiration for the painting. A bystander stepping up asked him why he was so astounded. "That is a question," was the reply, "you would not have asked, if you had my eyes." ÆLIAN.

THE LEAGUE OF SUITORS

Three daughters Leda, child of Thestius, bare,
Phoebe, and Clytemnestra mine own wife,
And Helen. Wooing this last princess came
In fortune foremost in all Hellas-land.
With fearful threatenings breathed they murder, each
Against his rivals, if he won her not.
Then sore perplexed was Tyndareus, her sire,
How, giving or refusing, he should 'scape
Shipwreck: and this thing came into his mind,
That each to each the suitors should make oath,
And clasp right hands . . . and swear to this:
Whose wife soever Tyndareus' child should be,
Him to defend: if any from her home
Stole her and fled, and thrust her lord aside,
To march against him, and to raze his town,
Greek or alien, with their mailed array. EURIPIDES (*Way's translation*).

HELENA'S OWN STORY

"Nor is my native land unknown to fame, e'en Sparta, or my sire Tyndareus; for a legend tells how Zeus winged his way to my mother Leda's breast, in the sumblance of a swan, and thus as he fled, pursued by an eagle, achieved by guile his amorous purpose. My name is Helen. To a hollow vale on Ida came three goddesses to Paris, for beauty's prize contending, Hera and Cypris and the virgin child of Zeus, eager to secure the verdict on their loveliness. Now Cypris held out my beauty as a bribe before the eyes of Paris, saying he should marry me; and so she won." EURIPIDES.

Helen, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicèan barks of yore
That gently o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, way-worn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo, in yon brilliant window-niche
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand,
Ah! Psyche, from the regions which
Are holy land! EDGAR ALLAN POE.

WHEN PARIS CAME TO SPARTA

There were they seated at the King's right hand,
And maidens bear them bread, and meat, and wine
Within that fair hall of the Argive land
Whose doors and roof with gold and silver shine,
As doth the dwelling-place of Zeus divine.
And Helen came from forth her fragrant bower
The fairest lady of immortal line,
Like morning, when the rosy dawn doth flower

Now in the upper chamber o'er the gate
Lay Menelaus on his carven bed,
And swift and sudden as the stroke of Fate
A deep sleep fell upon his weary head.
But the soft-wingèd God with wand of lead
Came not near Helen; wistful did she lie,
Till dark should change to gray, and gray to red,
And golden thronèd Morn sweep o'er the sky . . . .

And now the bower of Helen fill'd with light,
And now she knew the thing that she did fear
Was close upon her . . . leap'd from her fair carven bed
As some tormented thing that fear makes bold,
And on the ground she beat her golden head
And pray'd with bitter moanings manifold . . . . ANDREW LANG.

She, she survives, inimitable, etern!
Death may the trembling waves disperse; but Beauty sweet
Still blossometh: all things to life in her return,
And the worlds roll fore'er beneath her silver feet. LECONTE DE LISLE.

BEARING UNTO TROY DESTRUCTION FOR A DOWER

And she, unto her country and her kin
Leaving the clash of shields and spears and arming ships,
And bearing unto Troy destruction for a dower,
And overbold in sin,
Went fleetly through the gates, at midnight hour . . .
Woe for the bride-bed warm
Yet from the lovely limbs, the impress of the form
Of her who loved her lord awhile ago!
And woe for him who stands
Shamed, silent, unreproachful, stretching hands
That finds her not, and sees, yet will not see,
That she is far away!
And his sad fancy, yearning o'er the sea,
Shall summon and recall

Her wraith, once more to queen it in his hall.
  And when the night is deep,
Come visions, sweet and sad, and bearing pain
  Of hopings vain—
Void, void and vain, for scarce the sleeping sight
  Hath seen its old delight,
When through the grasps of love that bid it stay
  It vanishes away
On silent wings that roam adown the ways of Sleep. ÆSCHYLUS.

He
Who her unmatched perfection once has known,
Must die, or win and wear it for his own. GOETHE.

THE DEBATE AMONG THE SONS OF PRIAM

TROILUS—Paris . . . touch'd the ports desir'd,
And for an old aunt whom the Greeks held captive,
He brought a Grecian queen, whose youth and freshness
Wrinkles Apollo's, and makes stale the morning.
Why keep we her? the Grecians keep our aunt:
Is she worth keeping? why, she is a pearl,
Whose price hath launch'd above a thousand ships,
And turn'd crown'd kings to merchants. . . .

PARIS—Sir, I propose not merely to myself
The pleasures such a beauty brings with it;
But I would have the soil of her fair rape
Wip'd off, in honourable keeping her . . .
Well may we fight for her whom, we know well,
The world's large spaces cannot parallel. . . .

TROILUS—She is a theme of honour and renown;
A spur to valiant and magnanimous deeds. SHAKESPEARE.

O thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars. MARLOWE.

DURING THE TEN YEARS OF SIEGE AND BATTLE

So saying, the goddess into Helen's soul
Sweetest desire infus'd to see again
Her former lord, her parents and her home
At once, o'ermantled with her snowy veil
She started forth, and as she went, let fall
A tender tear; nor went she forth alone,
But with two maidens . . . to attend her hasty steps
That bore her quickly to the Scæan gate.
There Priam sat, . . . all, elders of the people; warriors erst,
But idle now through age, in voice alike
All indefatigable as the cicala,
Which, perch'd among the boughs, sends forth at noon
Through all the grove its slender ditty sweet . . .
Who, soon as Helen on the steps they saw,
In accents quick, but whisper'd, thus remark'd:
  "Trojans and Grecians wage, with fair excuse,
Long war for so much beauty. Oh, how like
In feature to the goddesses above!
Pernicious loveliness! Ah, hence away,
Resistless as thou art and all divine
Nor leave a curse to us, and to our sons." HOMER (COWPER).

HELEN AND ACHILLES

Helena—Ah my brave brothers! How they tended me!
How loved me! often wishing me to mount
Each his horse first: they made me poise and hurl
Their javelins: they would teach me archery.
Happy hours! . . . Dear Kastor! Polydeukes
Still dearer! Often shall I think of you
As you were, and as I was, on the bank
Of the Eurotas.
Achilles—Is there not at home
One once as dear?
Helena—Ah, poor Hermione!
A babe was she who could not play with me,
Yet 'twas my pride and pleasure to survey
Her roseate fingers on my unrobed breast:
And I could almost envy then the goat
That stampt and feebly cried to give her milk.
My brothers teazed her for it, wicked pair!
Achilles—Helena! Helena of Menelaus!
My mother is reported to have left
About me only one part vulnerable;
I have at last found where it is. Farewell! WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

At length I saw a lady within call,
Stiller than chisell'd marble, standing there
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall
And most divinely fair. TENNYSON.

WAS IT A PHANTOM PARIS CARRIED TO TROY?

Within the enclosure of Proteus there is a temple called the temple of the "foreign Aphrodite," which temple I conjecture to be one of Helen . . . because I have heard the tale how Helen dwelt with Proteus. . . . And the priests told me . . . that the things concerning Helen happened thus:—Paris having carried her off was sailing away from Sparta to his own land, and when he had come to the Ægean Sea, contrary winds drove him from his course to the Sea of Egypt; and after that, since the blasts continued to blow, he came to Egypt himself. Now there was upon the shore, and still is, a temple of Hercules, in which, if any man's slave take refuge and have the sacred marks set upon him, giving himself over to the god, it is not lawful to lay hands upon him; and this custom has continued unchanged down to my own time. Accordingly, the attendants of Paris, having heard of the custom, ran away from him, and sitting down as suppliants of the god, accused Paris, because they desired to do him hurt, telling the whole tale how things were about Helen and about the wrong done to Menelaus, and this accusation they made not only to the priests but also to the warden of this river-mouth, whose name was Thoris. Thoris then sent forthwith a message to Proteus at Memphis. . . . In reply Proteus sent word: "Seize this man, whosoever he may be, who has done impiety to his own host, and bring him into my presence, that I may know what he will find to say." Hearing this, Thoris seized Paris and detained his ships, and after that he had brought the man himself up to Memphis and with him Helen and the wealth he had, and also the suppliants. . . . Proteus began to ask Paris who he was and from whence he was voyaging; and he both recounted to him his descent and told him the name of his country, and moreover related of his voyage, from whence he was sailing. After this Proteus asked him whence he had taken Helen; and when Paris went astray in his account and did not speak the truth, those who had been suppliants convicted him of falsehood, relating in full the whole tale of the wrong done. At length Proteus declared to them this sentence: "Were it not that I count it a matter of great moment not to slay any of those strangers who being driven from their course by winds have come to my land, I should have taken vengeance on thee on behalf of the man of Hellas, seeing that thou, most base of men, having received hospitality from him, didst work against him a most impious deed. For thou didst go in unto the wife of thine own host; and even this was not enough for thee, but thou didst stir her up with desire and hast gone away with her like a thief. Moreover not even this by itself was enough for thee, but thou art come hither with plunder taken from the house of thine host. Now therefore depart. . . . But this woman and the wealth which thou hast I will not allow thee to carry away, but I shall keep them safe for the Greek who was thy host, until he come himself and desire to carry them off to his home; to thyself however and thy fellow voyagers I proclaim that ye depart from your anchoring within three days . . . if not, ye will be dealt with as enemies. . . ."

I asked the priests whether it is but an idle tale which the Greeks tell of that which they say happened about Troy; and they answered me thus, saying that they had their knowledge from Menelaus himself. After the rape of Helen there came indeed to the Trojan land a large army of Greeks to help Menelaus; and when the army had come out of the ships to land and had pitched its camp there, they sent messengers to Troy . . . and they demanded back Helen and the wealth which Paris had stolen, and satisfaction for the wrongs done: and the Trojans told the same tale then and afterwards . . . that in deed and in truth they had not Helen nor the wealth, but that both were in Egypt. The Greeks, thinking that they were being mocked, besieged the city until at last they took it; and when they had taken the wall and did not find Helen, they sent Menelaus himself to Proteus. HERODOTUS.

She moves a goddess, and she looks a Queen. HOMER (POPE).

WHEN HELEN HAS ESCAPED FROM EGYPT ON PRETENSE OF BURYING MENELAUS AT SEA

MESSENGER (*to the King*)—Soon as the daughter of Zeus had left the royal mansion and come unto the sea, daintily picking her way, most craftily she set to mourn her husband, though he was not dead but at her side. When we reached thy docks, we began to launch the fastest ships, with fifty rowers: some set up the mast, others ranged the oars and let down astern the rudder. While we were thus employed those Hellenes, fellow voyagers with Menelaus, were watching us, it seems, and they drew nigh the beach, clad in the rags of shipwrecked men—well-built, but squalid to look upon. . . . Then they with feigned tears proceeded to the ship, bearing aboard the offerings to be thrown into the deep! Thereat were we suspicious and communed among ourselves regarding the number of extra passengers; still we kept silence out of respect for thy orders. . . . At length, when the ship was fully freighted, Helen climbed the ladder with graceful step and took her seat midway betwixt the rowers' benches, and he sat by her side, even Menelaus who was called dead; and the rest . . . sat them down, each beside his man, with swords concealed beneath their cloaks, and the billows soon were echoing to the rowers' song. Now when we were put out a space, the helmsman asked, "Shall we, sir stranger, sail yet further on our course, or will this serve?" And he answered, "'Tis far enough for me," while in his right hand he gripped his sword and stepped on to the prow; then standing o'er the bull to slay it, never a word said he of any dead man, but cut its throat and thus made prayer: "Poseidon, lord of the sea, and ye holy daughters of Nereus, bring me and my wife safe and sound to Nauplia's strand." Anon a gush of blood spouted into the tide. . . . Forthwith up sprang each man, the one part armed with poles, the other with swords. And the ship ran red with blood; while Helen from her seat thus cheered them on: "Where is the fame ye won at Troy? Show it against these barbarians." Then as they hasted to the fray, some would fall and some rise up again, while others hadst thou seen laid low in death. Menelaus, in full armour, made his way, sword in hand, to every point where his watchful eye perceived his comrades in distress; so we leapt from the ship and swam; and he cleared the benches of the rowers. Then the prince set himself to steer. They hoisted the mast, and favouring breezes blew; and now they are clear away, while I, from death escaped, let myself down into the sea by the anchor-chain.

THE KING—Woe is me! Cozened by a woman's tricks! My bride hath escaped me; but I will avenge me upon my treacherous sister. EURIPIDES.

HOME IN SPARTA WITH MENELAUS

Forth from her fragrant high-roofed chamber Helen came, like golden-shafted Artemis. For her Adraste placed a well-wrought chair; Alkippe brought a rug of soft wool and Phylo a silver basket which Alkandre gave, the wife of Polybos, who lived in Thebes of Egypt, where wealth in plenty fill the houses . . . And then, besides, his wife gave Helen beautiful gifts; she gave a golden distaff and a basket upon rollers fashioned of silver, and its rim finished with gold. This her attendant Phylo now brought and set beside her, filled with a curious yarn; across it lay the distaff, charged with dark wool. Seated upon her chair—beneath there was a footstool for her feet—she straightway questioned thus her husband closely . . . and Argive Helen bade the maids to set a couch beneath the portico, to lay upon it beautiful purple rugs, spread blankets over these, and then place woolen mantles on the outside for a covering. So the maids left the hall, with torches in their hands, and spread the bed; and a page led forth the strangers. Thus in the fore part of the house slept lord Telemachus and the proud son of Nestor. But the son of Atreus slept in the recess of the high hall, and by him long-robed Helen lay, a queen of women.

HOMER: *Odyssey* (PALMER).

"SHE SEEMED TO ALL WHAT EACH DESIRED"

Down to the ships she comes with Menelaus hand in hand; and the people, "gazing on the glory and the winning grace of the faultless woman, were astonished; nor could they dare by whispers or aloud to humble her with insults; but gladly they saw in her a goddess, for she seemed to all what each desired. (Quintus Smyrnæus)."

This is the apotheosis of Helen; and this reading of her romance is far more true to the general current of Greek feeling than that suggested by Euripides. Theocritus, in his exquisite marriage song of Helen, has not a word to say by hint or innuendo that she will bring a curse upon her husband. Like dawn is the beauty of her face; like the moon in the heaven of night, or the spring when winter is ended, or like a cypress in the meadow, so is Helen among Spartan maids. JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

JURGEN, WHO NO LONGER DESIRES PERFECTION, SEES A VISION

And for the third time Koshchei waved his hand. Now came to Jurgen a gold-haired woman, clothed all in white. She was tall, and lovely, and tender to regard: and hers was not the red and white comeliness of many ladies that were famed for beauty, but rather it had the even glow of ivory. Her nose was large and high in the bridge, her flexible mouth was not of the smallest; and yet, whatever other persons might have said, to Jurgen this woman's countenance was in all things perfect. And, beholding her, Jurgen kneeled.

He hid his face in her white robe: and he stayed thus, without speaking, for a long while.

"Lady of my vision," he said, and his voice broke—"there is that in you which wakes old memories. For now assuredly I believe your father was not Dom Manuel but that ardent bird which nestled very long ago in Leda's bosom. And now Troy's sons are all in Adês' keeping, in the world below; fire has consumed the walls of Troy and the years have forgotten her tall conquerors; but still you are bringing woe on woe to hapless sufferers."

And again his voice broke. For the world seemed cheerless, and like a house that none has lived in for a great while.

Queen Helen, the delight of gods and men, replied nothing at all, because there was no need, inasmuch as the man who has once glimpsed her loveliness is beyond saving, and beyond the desire of being saved. JAMES BRANCH CABELL.

Her sweet face now unworshipp'd and unseen
Abides the symbol of all loveliness,
Of beauty ever stainless in the stress
Of warring lusts and fears;—and still divine,
Still ready with immortal peace to bless
Them that with pure hearts worship at her shrine. ANDREW LANG.

How Santa Claus Came to Simpson's Bar

By BRET HARTE

IT HAD been raining in the valley of the Sacramento. The North Fork had overflowed its banks and Rattlesnake Creek was impassable. The few boulders that had marked the summer ford at Simpson's Crossing were obliterated by a vast sheet of water stretching to the foothills. The up stage was stopped at Grangers; the last mail had been abandoned in the *tules*, the rider swimming for his life. "An area," remarked the "Sierra Avalanche," with pensive local pride, "as large as the State of Massachusetts is now under water."

Nor was the weather any better in the foothills. The mud lay deep on the mountain road; wagons that neither physical force nor moral objurgation could move from the evil ways into which they had fallen, encumbered the track, and the way to Simpson's Bar was indicated by broken-down teams and hard swearing. And farther on, cut off and inaccessible, rained upon and bedraggled, smitten by high winds and threatened by high water, Simpson's Bar, on the eve of Christmas day, 1862, clung like a swallow's nest to the rocky entablature and splintered capitals of Table Mountain, and shook in the blast.

As night shut down on the settlement, a few lights gleamed through the mist from the windows of cabins on either side of the highway now crossed and gullied by lawless streams and swept by marauding winds. Happily most of the population were gathered at Thompson's store, clustered around a red-hot stove, at which they silently spat in some accepted sense of social communion that perhaps rendered conversation unnecessary. Indeed, most methods of diversion had long since been exhausted on Simpson's Bar; high water had suspended the regular occupations on gulch and on river, and a consequent lack of money and whiskey had taken the zest from most illegitimate recreation. Even Mr. Hamlin was fain to leave the Bar with fifty dollars in his pocket,—the only amount actually realized of the large sums won by him in the successful exercise of his arduous profession. "Ef I was asked," he remarked somewhat later,—"ef I was asked to p'int out a purty little village where a retired sport as didn't care for money could exercise hisself, frequent and lively, I'd say Simpson's Bar; but for a young man with a large family depending on his exertions, it don't pay." As Mr. Hamlin's family consisted mainly of female adults, this remark is quoted rather to show the breadth of his humour than the exact extent of his responsibilities.

Howbeit, the unconscious objects of this satire sat that evening in the listless apathy begotten of idleness and lack of excitement. Even the sudden splashing of hoofs before the door did not arouse them. Dick Bullen alone paused in the act of scraping out his pipe, and lifted his head, but no other one of the group indicated any interest in, or recognition of, the man who entered.

It was a figure familiar enough to the company, and known in Simpson's Bar as "The Old Man." A man of perhaps fifty years; grizzled and scant of hair, but still fresh and youthful of complexion. A face full of ready, but not very powerful sympathy, with a chameleon-like aptitude for taking on the shade and colour of contiguous moods and feelings. He had evidently just left some hilarious companions, and did not at first notice the gravity of the group, but clapped the shoulder of the nearest man jocularly, and threw himself into a vacant chair.

"Jest heard the best thing out, boys! Ye know Smiley, over yar,—Jim Smiley,—funniest man in the Bar? Well, Jim was jest telling the richest yarn about——"

"Smiley's a —— fool," interrupted a gloomy voice.

"A particular —— skunk." added another in sepulchral accents.

A silence followed these positive statements. The Old Man glanced quickly around the group. Then his face slowly changed. "That's so," he said reflectively, after a pause, "certingly a sort of a skunk and suthin' of a fool. In course." He was silent for a moment as in painful contemplation of the unsavouriness and folly of the unpopular Smiley. "Dismal weather, ain't it?" he added, now fully embarked on the current of prevailing sentiment. "Mighty rough papers on the boys, and no show for money this season. And to-morrow's Christmas."

There was a movement among the men at this announcement, but whether of satisfaction or disgust was not plain. "Yes," continued the Old Man in the lugubrious tone he had, within the last few moments, unconsciously adopted,—"yes, Christmas, and to-night's Christmas eve. Ye see, boys, I kinder thought—that is, I sorter had an idee, jest passin' like, you know—that may be ye'd all like to come over to my house to-night and have a sort of tear round. But I suppose, now, you wouldn't? Don't feel like it, may be?" he added with anxious sympathy, peering into the faces of his companions.

"Well, I don't know," responded Tom Flynn with some cheerfulness. "P'r'aps we may. But how about your wife, Old Man? What does *she* say to it?"

The Old Man hesitated. His conjugal experience had not been a happy one, and the fact was known to Simpson's Bar. His first wife, a delicate, pretty little woman, had suffered keenly and secretly from the jealous suspicions of her husband, until one day he invited the whole Bar to his house to expose her infidelity. On arriving, the party found the shy, *petite* creature quietly engaged in her household duties, and retired abashed and discomfited. But the sensitive woman did not easily recover from the shock of this extraordinary outrage. It was with difficulty she regained her equanimity sufficiently to release her lover from the closet in which he was concealed and escape with him. She left a boy of three years to comfort her bereaved husband. The Old Man's present wife had been his cook. She was large, loyal, and aggressive.

Before he could reply, Joe Dimmick suggested with great directness that it was the "Old Man's house," and that, invoking the Divine Power, if the case were his own, he would invite whom he pleased, even if in so doing he imperiled his salvation. The Powers of Evil, he further remarked, should contend against him vainly. All this delivered with a terseness and vigour lost in this necessary translation.

"In course. Certainly. Thet's it," said the Old Man with a sympathetic frown. "Thar's no trouble about *thet*. It's my own house, built every stick on it myself. Don't you be afeard o' her, boys. She *may* cut up a trifle rough—ez wimmin do—but she'll come 'round." Secretly the Old Man trusted to the exaltation of liquor and the power of courageous example to sustain him in such an emergency.

As yet, Dick Bullen, the oracle and leader of Simpson's Bar, had not spoken. He now took his pipe from his lips. "Old Man, how's that yer Johnny gettin' on? Seems to me he didn't look so peart last time I seed him on the bluff heavin' rocks at Chinamen. Didn't seem to take much interest in it. Thar was a gang of 'em by yar yesterday—drownded out up the river, —and I kinder thought o' Johnny, and how he'd miss 'em! May be now, we'd be in the way ef he wus sick?"

The father, evidently touched not only by this pathetic picture of Johnny's deprivation, but by the considerate delicacy of the speaker, hastened to assure him that Johnny was better and that a "little fun might 'liven him up." Whereupon Dick arose, shook himself, and saying, "I'm ready. Lead the way, Old Man: here goes," himself led the way with a leap, a characteristic howl, and darted out into the night. As he passed through the outer room he caught up a blazing brand from the hearth. The action was repeated by the rest of the party, closely following and elbowing each other, and before the astonished proprietor of Thompson's grocery was aware of the intention of his guests, the room was deserted.

The night was pitchy dark. In the first gust of wind their temporary torches were extinguished, and only the red brands, dancing and flitting in the gloom like drunken will-o'-the-wisps, indicated their whereabouts. Their way led up Pine-Tree Cañon, at the head of which a broad, low, bark-thatched cabin burrowed in the mountainside. It was the home of the Old Man, and the entrance to the tunnel in which he worked when he worked at all. Here the crowd paused for a moment, out of delicate deference to their host, who came up panting in the rear.

"P'r'aps ye'd better hold on a second out yer, whilst I go in and see thet things is all right," said the Old Man, with an indifference he was far from feeling. The suggestion was graciously accepted, the door opened and closed on the host, and the crowd, leaning their backs against the wall and cowering under the eaves, waited and listened.

For a few moments there was no sound but the dripping of water from the eaves, and the stir and rustle of wrestling boughs above them. Then the men became uneasy, and whispered suggestion and suspicion passed from the one to the other. "Reckon she's caved in his head the first lick!" "Decoyed him inter the tunnel and barred him up, likely." "Got him down and sittin' on him." "Prob'ly bilin' suthin' to heave on us: stand clear the door, boys!" For just then the latch clicked, the door slowly opened, and a voice said, "Come in out o' the wet."

The voice was neither that of the Old Man nor of his wife. It was the voice of a small boy, its weak treble broken by that preternatural hoarseness which only vagabondage and the habit of premature self-assertion can give. It was the face of a small boy that looked up at theirs—a face that might have been pretty and even refined but that it was darkened by evil knowledge from within, and dirt and hard experience from without. He had a blanket around his shoulders and had evidently just risen from his bed. "Come in," he repeated, "and don't make no noise. The Old Man's in there talking to mar," he continued, pointing to an adjacent room which seemed to be a kitchen, from which the Old Man's voice came in deprecating accents. "Let me be," he added, querulously, to Dick Bullen, who had caught him up, blanket and all, and was affecting to toss him into the fire, "let go o' me, you d—d old fool, d'ye hear?"

Thus adjured, Dick Bullen lowered Johnny to the ground with a smothered laugh, while the men, entering quietly, ranged themselves around a long table of rough boards which occupied the center of the room. Johnny then gravely proceeded to a cupboard and brought out several articles which he deposited on the table. "Thar's whiskey. And crackers. And red herons. And cheese." He took a bite of the latter on his way to the table. "And sugar." He scooped up a mouthful *en route* with a small and very dirty hand. "And terbacker. Thar's dried appils, too, on the shelf, but I don't admire 'em. Appils is swellin'. Thar," he concluded, "now wade in, and don't be afeard. *I* don't mind the old woman. She don't b'long to *me*. S'long."

He had stepped to the threshold of a small room, scarcely larger than a closet, partitioned off from the main apartment, and holding in its dim recess a small bed. He stood there a moment looking at the company, his bare feet peeping from the blanket, and nodded.

"Hello, Johnny! You ain't goin' to turn in agin, are ye?" said Dick.

"Yes, I are," responded Johnny, decidedly.

"Why, wot's up, old fellow?"

"I'm sick."

"How sick?"

"I've got a fevier. And childblains. And roomatiz," returned Johnny, and vanished within. After a moment's pause, he added in the dark, apparently from under the bedclothes—"And biles!"

There was an embarrassing silence. The men looked at each other, and at the fire. Even with the appetizing banquet before them, it seemed as if they might again fall into the despondency of Thompson's grocery when the voice of the Old Man, incautiously lifted, came deprecatingly from the kitchen.

"Certainly! Thet's so. In course they is. A gang o' lazy drunken loafers, and that ar Dick Bullen's the ornariest of all. Didn't hev no more *sabe* than to come round yar with sickness in the house and no provisions. Thet's what I said: 'Bullen,' sez I, 'it's crazy drunk you are, or a fool,' sez I, 'to think o' such a thing.' 'Staples,' I sez, 'be you a man, Staples, and 'spect to raise h—ll under my roof and invalids lyin' round?' But they would come—they would. Thet's wot you must 'spect o' such trash as lays round the Bar."

A burst of laughter from the men followed this unfortunate exposure. Whether it was overheard in the kitchen, or whether the Old Man's irate companion had just then exhausted all other modes of expressing her contemptuous indignation, I cannot say, but a back door was suddenly slammed with great violence. A moment later and the Old Man reappeared, haply unconscious of the cause of the late hilarious outburst, and smiled blandly.

"The old woman thought she'd jest run over to Mrs. McFadden's for a sociable call," he explained, with jaunty indifference, as he took a seat at the board.

Oddly enough it needed this untoward

incident to relieve the embarrassment that was beginning to be felt by the party, and their natural audacity returned with their host. I do not propose to record the convivialities of that evening. The inquisitive reader will accept the statement that the conversation was characterized by the same intellectual exaltation, the same cautious reverence, the same fastidious delicacy, the same rhetorical precision, and the same logical and coherent discourse somewhat later in the evening, which distinguish similar gatherings of the masculine sex in more civilized localities and under more favourable auspices. No glasses were broken in the absence of any; no liquor was uselessly spilt on floor or table in the scarcity of that article.

It was nearly midnight when the festivities were interrupted. "Hush," said Dick Bullen, holding up his hand. It was the querulous voice of Johnny from his adjacent closet: "O dad!"

The Old Man arose hurriedly and disappeared in the closet. Presently he reappeared. "His rheumatiz is coming on agin bad," he explained, "and he wants rubbin'." He lifted the demijohn of whiskey from the table and shook it. It was empty. Dick Bullen put down his tin cup with an embarrassed laugh. So did the others. The Old Man examined their contents and said hopefully, "I reckon that's enough; he don't need much. You hol' on, all o' you, for a spell, and I'll be back"; and vanished in the closet with an old flannel shirt and the whiskey. The door closed but imperfectly, and the following dialogue was distinctly audible:——

"Now, sonny, whar does she ache worst?"

"Sometimes over yar and sometimes under yer; but it's most powerful from yer to yer. Rub yer, dad."

A silence seemed to indicate a brisk rubbing. Then Johnny:

"Hevin' a good time out yer, dad?"

"Yes, sonny."

"To-morrer's Chrismiss—ain't it?"

"Yes, sonny. How does she feel now?"

"Better. Rub a little furder down. Wot's Chrismiss, anyway? Wot's it all about?"

"O, it's a day."

This exhaustive definition was apparently satisfactory, for there was a silent interval of rubbing. Presently Johnny again:

"Mar sez that everywhere else but yer everybody gives things to everybody Chrismiss, and then she jist waded inter you. She sez thar's a man they call Sandy Claws, not a white man, you know, but a kind o' Chinemin, comes down the chimbley night afore Chrismiss and gives things to chillern,—boys like me. Puts 'em in their butes! Thet's what she tried to play upon me. Easy now, pop, whar are you rubbin' to—thet's a mile from the place. She jest made that up, didn't she, jest to aggrewate me and you? Don't rub thar. . . . Why, dad!"

In the great quiet that seemed to have fallen upon the house the sigh of the near pines and the drip of leaves without was very distinct. Johnny's voice, too, was lowered as he went on, "Don't you take on now, fur I'm gettin' all right fast. Wot's the boys doin' out thar?"

The Old Man partly opened the door and peered through. His guests were sitting there sociably enough, and there were a few silver coins and a lean buckskin purse on the table. "Bettin' on suthin'—some little game or 'nother. They're all right," he replied to Johnny, and recommenced his rubbing.

"I'd like to take a hand and win some money," said Johnny, reflectively, after a pause.

The Old Man glibly repeated what was evidently a familiar formula, that if Johnny would wait until he struck it rich in the tunnel he'd have lots of money, etc., etc.

"Yes," said Johnny, "but you don't. And whether you strike it or I win it, it's about the same. It's all luck. But it's mighty cur'o's about Chrismiss—ain't it? Why do they call it Chrismiss?"

Perhaps from some instinctive deference to the overhearing of his guests, or from some vague sense of incongruity, the Old Man's reply was so low as to be inaudible beyond the room.

"Yes," said Johnny, with some slight abatement of interest, "I've heerd o' *him* before. Thar, that 'll do, dad. I don't ache near so bad as I did. Now wrap me tight in this yer blanket. So. Now," he added in a muffled whisper, "sit down yer by me till I go asleep." To assure himself of obedience, he disengaged one hand from the blanket and, grasping his father's sleeve, again composed himself to rest.

For some moments the Old Man waited patiently. Then the unwonted stillness of the house excited his curiosity, and without moving from the bed, he cautiously opened the door with his disengaged hand, and looked into the main room. To his infinite surprise it was dark and deserted.

But even then a smouldering log on the hearth broke, and by the upspringing blaze he saw the figure of Dick Bullen sitting by the dying embers.

"Hello!"

Dick started, rose, and came somewhat unsteadily toward him.

"Whar's the boys?" said the Old Man.

"Gone up the cañon on a little *pasear*. They're coming back for me in a minit. I'm waitin' round for 'em. What are you starin' at, Old Man?" he added with a forced laugh; "do you think I'm drunk?"

The Old Man might have been pardoned the supposition, for Dick's eyes were humid and his face flushed. He loitered and lounged back to the chimney, yawned, shook himself, buttoned up his coat and laughed. "Liquor ain't so plenty as that, Old Man. Now don't you git up," he continued, as the Old Man made a movement to release his sleeve from Johnny's hand. "Don't you mind manners. Sit jest whar you be; I'm goin' in a jiffy. Thar, that's them now."

There was a low tap at the door. Dick Bullen opened it quickly, nodded "Good night" to his host, and disappeared. The Old Man would have followed him but for the hand that still unconsciously grasped his sleeve. He could have easily disengaged it: it was small, weak, and emaciated. But perhaps because it *was* small, weak, and emaciated, he changed his mind, and, drawing his chair closer to the bed, rested his head upon it. In this defenceless attitude the potency of his earlier potations surprised him. The room flickered and faded before his eyes, reappeared, faded again, went out, and left him—asleep.

Meantime Dick Bullen, closing the door, confronted his companions. "Are you ready?" said Staples. "Ready," said Dick: "what's the time?" "Past twelve," was the reply; "can you make it?—it's 'nigh on fifty miles, the round trip hither and yon." "I reckon," returned Dick, shortly. "Whar's the mare?" "Bill and Jack's holdin' her at the crossin'." "Let 'em hold on a minit longer," said Dick.

He turned and re-entered the house softly. By the light of the guttering candle and dying fire he saw that the door of the little room was open. He stepped toward it on tiptoe and looked in. The Old Man had fallen back in his chair, snoring, his helpless feet thrust out in a line with his collapsed shoulders, and his hat pulled over his eyes. Beside him, on a narrow wooden bedstead, lay Johnny, muffled tightly in a blanket that hid all save a strip of forehead and a few curls damp with perspiration. Dick Bullen made a step forward, hesitated, and glanced over his shoulder into the deserted room. Everything was quiet. With a sudden resolution he parted his huge mustaches with both hands and stooped over the sleeping boy. But even as he did so a mischievous blast, lying in wait, swooped down the chimney, rekindled the hearth, and lit up the room with a shameless glow from which Dick fled in bashful terror.

His companions were already waiting for him at the crossing. Two of them were struggling in the darkness with some strange misshapen bulk, which as Dick came nearer took the semblance of a great yellow horse.

It was the mare. She was not a pretty picture. From her Roman nose to her rising haunches, from her arched spine hidden by the stiff *machillas* of a Mexican saddle, to her thick, straight, bony legs, there was not a line of equine grace. In her half-blind but wholly vicious white eyes, in her protruding under lip, in her monstrous colour, there was nothing but ugliness and vice.

"Now then," said Staples, "stand cl'ar of her heels, boys, and up with you. Don't miss your first holt of her mane, and mind ye get your off stirrup *quick*. Ready!"

There was a leap, a scrambling struggle, a bound, a wild retreat of the crowd, a circle of flying hoofs, two springless leaps that jarred the earth, a rapid play and jingle of spurs, a plunge, and then the voice of Dick somewhere in the darkness, "All right!"

"Don't take the lower road back onless you're hard pushed for time! Don't hold her in down hill! We'll be at the ford at five. G'lang! Hoopa! Mula! GO!"

A splash, a spark struck from the ledge in the road, a clatter in the rocky cut beyond, and Dick was gone.

. . . . .

Sing, O Muse, the ride of Richard Bullen! Sing, O Muse of chivalrous men! the sacred quest, the doughty deeds, the battery of low churls, the fearsome ride and grewsome perils of the Flower of Simpson's Bar! Alack! she is dainty, this Muse! She will have none of this bucking brute and swaggering, ragged rider, and I must fain follow him in prose, afoot!

It was one o'clock, and yet he had only gained Rattlesnake Hill. For in that time Jovita had rehearsed to him all her imperfections and practised all her vices. Thrice had she stumbled. Twice had she thrown up her Roman nose in a straight line with the reins, and, resisting bit and spur, struck out madly across country. Twice had she reared, and, rearing, fallen backward; and twice had the agile Dick, unharmed, regained his seat before she found her vicious legs again. And a mile beyond them, at the foot of a long hill, was Rattlesnake Creek. Dick knew that here was the crucial test of his ability to perform his enterprise, set his teeth grimly, put his knees well into her flanks, and changed his defensive tactics to brisk aggression. Bullied and maddened, Jovita began the descent of the hill. Here the artful Richard pretended to hold her in with ostentatious objurgation and well-feigned cries of alarm. It is unnecessary to add that Jovita instantly ran away. Nor need I state the time made in the descent; it is written in the chronicles of Simpson's Bar. Enough that in another moment, as it seemed to Dick, she was splashing on the overflowed banks of Rattlesnake Creek. As Dick expected, the momentum she had acquired carried her beyond the point of balking, and, holding her well together for a mighty leap, they dashed into the middle of the swiftly flowing current. A few moments of kicking, wading, and swimming, and Dick drew a long breath on the opposite bank.

The road from Rattlesnake Creek to Red Mountain was tolerably level. Either the plunge in Rattlesnake Creek had dampened her baleful fire, or the art which led to it had shown her the superior wickedness of her rider, for Jovita no longer wasted her surplus energy in wanton conceits. Once she bucked, but it was from force of habit; once she shied, but it was from a new, freshly painted meeting-house at the crossing of the county road. Hollows, ditches, gravelly deposits, patches of freshly springing grasses, flew from beneath her rattling hoofs. She began to smell unpleasantly, once or twice she coughed slightly, but there was no abatement of her strength or speed. By two o'clock he had passed Red Mountain and begun the descent to the plain. Ten minutes later the driver of the fast Pioneer coach was overtaken and passed by a "man on a Pinto hoss"—an event sufficiently notable for remark. At half past two Dick rose in his stirrups with a great shout. Stars were glittering through the rifted clouds, and beyond him, out of the plain, rose two spires, a flagstaff, and a straggling line of black objects. Dick jingled his spurs and swung his *riata*, Jovita bounded forward, and in another moment they swept into Tuttleville and drew up before the wooden piazza of "The Hotel of All Nations."

What transpired that night at Tuttleville is not strictly a part of this record. Briefly I may state, however, that after Jovita had been handed over to a sleepy ostler, whom she at once kicked into unpleasant consciousness, Dick sallied out with the barkeeper for a tour of the sleeping town. Lights still gleamed from a few saloons and gambling-houses; but, avoiding these, they stopped before several closed shops, and by persistent tapping and judicious outcry roused the proprietors from their beds, and made them unbar the doors of their magazines and expose their wares. Sometimes they were met by curses, but oftener by interest and some concern in their needs, and the interview was invariably concluded by a drink. It was three o'clock before this pleasantry was given over, and with a small waterproof bag of india-rubber strapped on his shoulders Dick returned to the hotel. But here he was waylaid by Beauty—Beauty opulent in charms, affluent in dress, persuasive in speech, and Spanish in accent. In vain she repeated the invitation in "Excelsior," happily scorned by all Alpine-climbing youth, and rejected by this child of the Sierras—a rejection softened in this instance by a laugh and his last gold coin. And then he sprang to the saddle and dashed down the lonely street and out into the lonelier plain, where presently the lights, the black line of houses, the spires, and the flagstaff sank into the earth behind him again and were lost in the distance.

The storm had cleared away, the air was brisk and cold, the outlines of adjacent landmarks were distinct, but it was half past four before Dick reached the meeting-house and the crossing of the county road. To avoid the rising grade he had taken a longer and more circuitous road, in whose viscid mud Jovita sank fetlock deep at every bound. It was a poor preparation for a steady ascent of five miles more; but Jovita, gathering her legs under her, took it with her usual blind, unreasoning fury, and a half-hour later reached the long level that led to Rattlesnake Creek. Another half-hour would bring him to the creek. He threw the reins lightly upon the neck of the mare, chirruped to her, and began to sing.

Suddenly Jovita shied with a bound that would have unseated a less practised rider. Hanging to her rein was a figure that had leaped from the bank, and at the same time from the road before her arose a shadowy horse and rider. "Throw up your hands," commanded this second apparition, with an oath.

Dick felt the mare tremble, quiver, and apparently sink under him. He knew what it meant and was prepared.

"Stand aside, Jack Simpson, I know you, you d—d thief. Let me pass or——"

He did not finish the sentence. Jovita rose straight in the air with a terrific bound, throwing the figure from her bit with a single shake of her vicious head, and charged with deadly malevolence down on the impediment before her. An oath, a pistol-shot, horse and highwayman rolled over in the road, and the next moment Jovita was a hundred yards away. But the good right arm of her rider, shattered by a bullet, dropped helplessly at his side.

Without slacking his speed he shifted the reins to his left hand. But a few moments later he was obliged to halt and tighten the saddle-girths that had slipped in the onset. This in his crippled condition took some time. He had no fear of pursuit, but looking up he saw that the eastern stars were already paling, and that the distant peaks had lost their ghostly whiteness, and now stood out blackly against a lighter sky. Day was upon him. Then, completely absorbed in a single idea, he forgot the pain of his wound, and mounting again dashed on toward Rattlesnake Creek. But now Jovita's breath came broken by gasps, Dick reeled in his saddle, and brighter and brighter grew the sky.

Ride, Richard; run, Jovita; linger, O day!

For the last few rods there was a roaring in his ears. Was it exhaustion from loss of blood, or what? He was dazed and giddy as he swept down the hill, and did not recognize his surroundings. Had he taken the wrong road, or was this Rattlesnake Creek?

It was. But the brawling creek he had swam a few hours before had risen, more than doubled its volume, and now rolled a swift and resistless river between him and Rattlesnake Hill. For the first time that night Richard's heart sank within him. The river, the mountain, the quickening east, swam before his eyes. He shut them to recover his self-control. In that brief interval, by some fantastic mental process, the little room at Simpson's Bar and the figures of the sleeping father and son rose upon him. He opened his eyes wildly, cast off his coat, pistol, boots, and saddle, bound his precious pack tightly to his shoulders, grasped the bare flanks of Jovita with his bared knees, and with a shout dashed into the yellow water. A cry rose from the opposite bank as the head of a man and horse struggled for a few moments against the battling current, and then were swept away amidst uprooted trees and whirling drift-wood.

. . . .

The Old Man started and woke. The fire on the hearth was dead, the candle in the outer room flickering in its socket, and somebody was rapping at the door. He opened it, but fell back with a cry before the dripping, half-naked figure that reeled against the doorpost.

"Dick?"

"Hush! Is he awake yet?"

"No —but, Dick?——"

"Dry up, you old fool! Get me some whiskey *quick!*" The Old Man flew and returned with—an empty bottle! Dick would have sworn, but his strength was not equal to the occasion. He staggered, caught at the handle of the door, and motioned to the Old Man.

"Thar's suthin' in my pack yer for Johnny. Take it off. I can't."

The Old Man unstrapped the pack and laid it before the exhausted man.

"Open it, quick!"

He did so with trembling fingers. It contained only a few poor toys—cheap and barbaric enough, goodness knows, but bright with paint and tinsel. One of them was broken; another, I fear, was irretrievably ruined by water; and on the third —ah me! there was a cruel spot.

"It don't look like much, that's a fact," said Dick, ruefully. . . . . "But it's the best we could do. . . . . Take 'em, Old Man, and put 'em in his stocking, and tell him—tell him, you know—hold me, Old Man—" The Old Man caught at his sinking figure. "Tell him," said Dick, with a weak little laugh —"tell him Sandy Claus has come."

And even so, bedraggled, ragged, unshaven, and unshorn, with one arm hanging helplessly at his side, Santa Claus came to Simpson's Bar and fell fainting on the first threshold. The Christmas dawn came slowly after, touching the remoter peaks with the rosy warmth of ineffable love. And it looked so tenderly on Simpson's Bar that the whole mountain, as if caught in a generous action, blushed to the skies.

The Servant in the House

By CHARLES RANN KENNEDY

Yours Ever
C. Rann Kennedy

"He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes. . . . If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

I JOHN, ii. 9-11; iv. 20.

"The hunger for brotherhood is at the bottom of the unrest of the modern civilized world."

GEORGE FREDERICK WATTS

CHARACTERS REPRESENTED

JAMES PONSONBY MAKESHYFTE, D.D., *the Most Reverend the Lord Bishop of Lancashire.*
THE REVEREND WILLIAM SMYTHE, *the Vicar.*
AUNTIE, *the Vicar's Wife.*
MARY, *their Niece.*
MR. ROBERT SMITH, *a Gentleman of Necessary Occupation.*
ROGERS, *a page-boy.*
MANSON, *a Butler.*

TIME—*Now.*
PLACE—*Here.*

THE SCENE—*The scene, which remains unchanged throughout the play, is a room in the vicarage. Jacobean in character, its oak-panelling and beamed-ceiling, together with some fine pieces of antique furniture, lend it an air of historical interest, whilst in all other respects it speaks of solid comfort, refinement, and unostentatious elegance. Evidently the room of a rich man, who has, however, apparently come to some compromise on the difficult question of his entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven; for the panelled walls possess, among other decorations, a richly ornamented crucifix, a Virgin and Child by an old master, certain saints in ecstasy, and a really remarkable modern oil-painting of the Divine Author of our religion.*

The main door of the room is at the back of the stage, somewhere toward the middle; it opens upon a hall, at the further side of which one may perceive, through the open door of another room, a goodly collection of well-bound and learned-looking volumes—the vicar's library. At the present moment these tomes of wisdom are inaccessible, as the library door is blocked up with unsightly mounds of earth, sewer-pipes, and certain workmen's implements. The fact is, the vicarage has been greatly disturbed of late, owing to a defect in the drainage—an unsavoury circumstance which receives further and regretful explication in the play itself.

Returning, then, to the room, one may see, in addition to the main door described above, another door, to the right of stage, and near to the audience. The curious may be glad to learn that this leads into a drawing-room, and incidentally affords one more means of communication with the house. Another exit is provided on the opposite side of the stage (left), where a couple of lofty French windows lead out into the garden. Above the drawing-room door is a fine old Jacobean mantel-piece; a fire burns brightly in the grate. To the left of the main door at the back is a long, low, mullioned window, through which one may see a blue sky, a thatched top or two of cottages, and the gray old tower of the church. Through the French windows are seen a gravel-walk, a lawn, trees, and a sun-dial.

Of the essential furniture of the scene, there may be mentioned: sideboard to right of main door; table, right-center of stage, with chairs; arm-chair by fireplace; settee, left, toward front; and a long oak stool in the window.

The various properties are described or implied in the text of the play.

THE FIRST ACT

(*As the curtain ascends,* ROGERS *and* MANSON *are discovered laying the table for breakfast, the lad being at the upper end of the table, facing the audience,* MANSON, *with his back to the audience, being at the lower end.* ROGERS *is an ordinary little cockney boy in buttons;* MANSON *is dressed in his native Eastern costume. His face is not seen until the point indicated lower down.*)

ROGERS (*glancing across curiously*)—Arskin' your pardon, Mr. Manson. . . .

MANSON—Yes: what is it, Rogers?

ROGERS—Funny thing—cawn't get it out of my 'ead as I've knowed you somewhere before. Don't scarcely seem possible, do it, Mr. Manson?

Manson—Many things are possible in this world, Rogers.

Rogers—That's all right; but 'ow long 'av' you been in England, Mr. Manson?

Manson—I landed late last night, if that's what you mean.

Rogers—Well, I never been in the continong of Asia, where you come from; and there you are!

Manson (*quietly*)—Yes: here I am. [*He goes to the sideboard and busies himself with serviettes, mats, etc.*]

Rogers—Perhaps it's this reincarnytion the *Daily Mail* been writing about. Ever see the *Daily Mail* out there, Mr. Manson?

Manson—No: we had few advantages.

Rogers—Rum idea, reincarnytion! Think, Mr. Manson, perhaps we wos lords once in ancient Babylon, you an' me!

Manson—And now butler and page-boy, eh?

Rogers (*scratching his head*)—Does seem a bit of a come-down, don't it?

Manson—That's one way of looking at it. (Rogers, *enticed of Satan, has conveyed a furtive spoonful of jam toward his mouth. Without turning.*) Isn't there jam in the kitchen, Rogers?

Rogers (*scared*)—Evings! E've got eyes in 'is boots! S'y, do you call it stealing, Mr. Manson?

Manson—Do you? (*Persisting.*) Do you? [Rogers *drops the spoon and moves mournfully away from temptation.*]

Rogers—'Pon my word, Mr. Manson, you give me the fair creeps and no mistike!

Manson—You will get over that when you know me better.

Rogers—Mr. Manson! Do you mind if I arst you a question?

Manson—No; what is it?

Rogers—What d'you wear them togs for? This ain't India.

Manson—People don't always recognize me in anything else. [*He turns for the first time. His face is one of awful sweetness, dignity, and strength. There is the calm of a great mastery about him, suited to his habit as a servant.*]

Rogers—Garn, Mr. Manson, that's a bit orf! Clothes don't make all that difference, come now! . . .

Manson—They are the only things the people of this world see.

Rogers (*after a pause*)—Excuse me, Mr. Manson, you mek me larf.

Manson—That's all right, Rogers. I have a sense of humour myself, or I shouldn't be here.

Rogers (*suddenly sentimental*)—Talking about clothes, Mr. Manson, I often thinks in my 'ead as I'd like to be a church clergyman, like master. Them strite-up collars are very becoming. Wouldn't you, Mr. Manson?

Manson—Wouldn't that be rather presuming, Rogers?

Rogers—Don't you mek no mistike about it! 'Ere! (*He grows confidential.*) *You are* a butler, ain't you? Ain't you, now? . . .

Manson—Something like that.

Rogers—Well, perhaps master 'asn't allus been as 'igh— See! O' course, I don't know, but they *do* s'y as 'e was once only a . . . Wot oh! 'Ere 'e is! [*The* Vicar'*s voice is heard off.*]

Vicar—I shall be in to breakfast at a quarter to nine. Don't wait for me, dearest. (*He enters hurriedly from door, right, watch in hand. He has on his cassock and biretta.*) So awkward—Both my curates down with the whooping-cough! To-day, too! Just when I was expecting . . . [*As he goes up stage, left of table,* Manson *comes down, right, with serviettes. The* Vicar *wheels round slowly, facing him. Observing his astonishment,* Rogers *steps forward with explanation.*]

Rogers—It's the new butler, sir. Mr. Manson, sir.

Vicar—Surely, I—I've seen you somewhere before.

Manson (*looking at him*)—Have you, sir?

Vicar—Hm! No, I can't quite . . .

Rogers—Beg pardon, sir: getting on for eight. [*He hands him a small silver paten upon which there is a piece of bread.*]

Vicar (*taking it mechanically*)—Hm! These, mysteries are not always helpful. . . . Anyway. I'm glad to see you, Manson. When did you arrive? [*He begins to break the bread into fragments whilst talking.*]

Manson—Early this morning, sir. I should have come sooner; but I had a little trouble down at the Customs.

Vicar—Indeed! How was that?

Manson—They said something about the new Alien Act, sir.

Vicar—Of course, of course. Er . . . You speak English remarkably well.

Manson—I have seen a good deal of the English, one time and another.

Vicar—That's good: it will save a lot of explanation. By-the-bye. . . . My old friend in Brindisi, who recommended you, writes that you bore a very excellent character with your late employer in India; but there was one matter he didn't mention— No doubt you will recognize its importance in a clergyman's family— He never mentioned your religion.

Manson—I can soon remedy that, sir. My religion is very simple. I love God and all my brothers.

Vicar (*after a pause*)—God and your brothers. . . .

Manson—Yes, sir: *all* of them. [*The* Vicar *stands thoughtful for a moment. He places the paten on the table, beside him.*]

Vicar (*slowly*)—That is not always so easy, Manson; but it is my creed, too.

Manson—Then— Brother! [*Rapt in thought, the* Vicar *takes his proffered hand mechanically.* Mary *enters. She is a slim young girl in her teens, the picture of rosy sweetness and health.*]

Mary—Good-morning, Uncle William! Oh! . . . I suppose you're Manson? I must say you look simply ripping! How do you do? My name's Mary. [*She offers her hand.*]

Manson (*kissing it*)—A very dear name, too!

Mary (*embarrassed, blurting*)—We were wondering last night about your religion. I said . . .

Vicar—Mary, my child . . .

Mary—You don't *look* like a cannibal. After all, even the devil isn't as black as he's . . . Oh, I beg your pardon: perhaps I'm rude.

Vicar—Yes, indeed you are. Don't take any notice of our little feather-brain, Manson.

Mary—I say, has uncle told you who's coming to-day?

Manson—No.

Mary—Not about Uncle Josh?

Vicar—T-t-t! You mustn't call your Uncle Joshua that! It is irreverent. He may resent it.

Mary—You know, *you'll* make me positively dislike him! Just fancy, Manson, meeting an uncle whom you've never so much as set eyes on before! I don't even know what he looks like. [*She is looking* Manson *in the face. He returns her gaze curiously.*]

Manson—Then—you have a surprise in store.

Mary—*You* ought to be awfully interested! You will, when you hear where he comes from!

Manson—I *am*—interested.

Mary—Then guess who he is!

Manson—Guess—when I know already?

Mary—Oh, Uncle Joshua isn't his *only* name—don't you think that! He's a very important person, *I* can tell you! His name's on everybody's lips!

Manson (*dryly*)—Really!

Mary—Can't you guess? . . . Think of the very biggest person you ever heard of in this world!

Manson—In *this* world: that sounds rather like . . . Does he give free libraries?

Mary—I can't say I ever heard of that; but he does things quite as wonderful! Listen! What do you think of the Bishop of Benares!!

Manson (*unimpressed*)—Oh, it's the—Bishop of Benares, is it?

Mary—I must say, you don't seem very surprised! Surely you've heard of him? He *comes* from India.

Manson (*quietly*)—I happen to know him.

Vicar—No, really: this is most interesting!

Manson—As a man might know *his own soul*, sir—as they say in India. His work has been mine, so to speak.

Vicar—Bless me, you will know him better than I do. I have never seen him since I was quite a little lad.

Mary (*with prodigious solemnity*)—Just you think, Manson! He's my uncle—my own father's brother! [Manson *is now up stage between the two.*]

Manson—*Your* brother, sir?

Vicar (*fervently*)—I am grateful to God for it, Manson: he is. [Manson *regards him calmly for a moment: then he turns inquiringly toward* Mary.]

Manson—Then—Miss Mary? . . .

Vicar (*quickly*)—Oh, my niece is the daughter of —of my other brother.

Manson—I see: *two* brothers?

Vicar (*shortly*)—Yes, yes, I have: I—I had.

Manson (*resuming his work at the table*)—Thank you, sir: it's always helpful, coming to a new place, to know who are—and who are not—the family connections.

Vicar—Come, Rogers! My poor brethren in the church are waiting. I must see to their necessities at once. [*He starts for the door.*]

Manson—Pardon me, sir. [*He hands him the bread which, among those necessities, he has forgotten. The* Vicar *looks at him a moment in troubled thought, and then goes out, followed by* Rogers.]

Rogers (*at door*)—I'll be back to 'elp you in with the breakfast, Mr. Manson. [*Exit.*]

Mary—Now, Manson: let's talk! You've got nothing more to do? . . .

Manson—Not till breakfast.

Mary—Then come over here, and make ourselves comfy. (*They go over to the settee: she plumps herself down, gathering her legs up into a little bunch. He seats himself beside her.*) Now! Tell me everything you know about the Bishop of Benares!

Manson—What—Uncle Josh?

Mary—Ssh—ssh—ssh! That's naughty, you know! You heard what Uncle William said! . . . Do you think he'd very much mind if I called him Uncle Josh?

Manson—You may take it from *me*, that you may call him whatever you like.

Mary—That's all very well; but you're not Uncle Joshua!

Manson—No? . . .

Mary (*hotly*)—No, you're not!

Manson—Well, since you're so certain . . .

Mary (*with conviction*)—I'm perfectly certain he'll never stand a kid like me checking him and calling him names! Uncle William's quite right! . . . And that's why I've made up my mind that I sha'n't like him, after all!

Manson—Indeed, I hope you will!

Mary—Do you believe in liking people simply because they're uncles?

Manson—Perhaps I'm a prejudiced person.

Mary—I know exactly what he'll be—goody-goody, isn't he? You know—religious, and all that!

Manson—God forbid!

Mary (*fearfully*)—Oh, perhaps he's the other sort—like auntie's brother! He's a bishop—the Bishop of Lancashire. You see, I've heard a lot about bishops in my time, and they're not always quite nice men.

Manson—And what sort is the Bishop of Lancashire?

Mary—Well, I don't think I ought to tell you; but I once heard *Uncle William* call him a devil!—And he's a clergyman!

Manson—Your Uncle Joshua's reputation is exactly opposite.

Mary—There is that: everybody speaks awfully well of him.

Manson—I don't think I would go so far as that: some people blackguard him abominably.

Mary—No!—Who?

Manson—His clergy, chiefly.

Mary—His clergy! They must be dreadfully wicked men!

Manson—No—only blind: perhaps, also, a little deaf. But between the two they manage to make his work very difficult.

Mary—Why? What do they do?

Manson—It's partly what they do *not* do.

Mary—Oh, I see—lazy.

Manson—Not precisely—they work: they are not idle; but they serve other masters.

Mary—Such as whom?

Manson—The Bishop of Lancashire.

Mary (*after a pause*)—I always thought he was such a great success out there. The papers have been full of it—of the millions of people who follow him about: they say they almost worship him in some places. What kind of people are they?

Manson—Just common people.

Mary—And then, all that talk of the great churches he built out there! . . .

Manson—Churches?

Mary—Yes; didn't he?

Manson—He built one.

Mary—What's it like?

Manson—Those who have seen it say there is nothing like it on earth.

Mary (*eagerly*)—Have you seen it?

Manson—I was there when he built it.

Mary—From the very beginning?

Manson (*solemnly*) — From the beginning. Mary *pauses before speaking: then she says, slowly.*]

Mary—I hope I *shall* like him. Is he—is he anything like you? [Manson *regards her silently for a moment.*]

Manson—How is it that you know so little about him?

Mary—Well, you see, I only heard yesterday.

Manson—I thought you said his *name* was on everybody's *lips*.

Mary—You don't understand. I mean, I never knew that he had anything to do with *me*—that he was my father's brother.

Manson—Didn't *he* know?

Mary—Who—father? Oh, you see, I . . . I *don't know my father*. . . . Uncle William didn't know anything about it until yesterday.

Manson—Hm! That is strange, too'

Mary—There's a bit of a mystery about it altogether. Would you like to hear? It is rather like a fairy-tale.

Manson—It must be. Yes, do go on.

Mary—It was all through Uncle William's Restoration Fund. You see, our old church is in a perfectly rotten state of decay, and naturally it would take a lot to repair it: so uncle thought of starting a Fund—Yes! Wasn't it clever of him?—I addressed all the envelopes. Would you believe it, we couldn't get a single halfpenny! Isn't it a shame? —Such a nice old church, too!

Manson—How was that?

Mary—That's the question! People have been most rude! Oh, the letters we have had! The funny thing is, for all their fault-finding, they none of them agree with each other!—Some say the foundations are all wrong: some don't like the stained-glass windows; but if you ask me . . .

Manson—Yes, what do you think?

Mary—Well, uncle won't hear of it; but I can't help thinking old Bletchley is right. . . .

Manson—Who's he?

Mary—Oh, he's a dreadfully wicked man, I know that— He's the quack doctor in the village: he's—he's *an atheist!* . . .

Manson—Well, what does he think is the matter?

Mary—He says it's the DRAIN!

Manson—The—the drain? . . .

Mary—Um! You know, in spite of what uncle says, there *is* a smell: I had it in my nose all last Sunday morning. Up in the choir it's bad enough, and round by the pulpit— Ugh! I can't think how uncle stands it! That's why the people won't come to church— They *say* so: they stand in the market-place listening to old Bletchley, instead of listening to uncle and trying to be good. The odd thing is, it must be that very same drain that's causing the trouble in uncle's study— That's his study out there, where they've been digging: it's where he writes his sermons. You know, *I've* noticed the smell for some time, but uncle got so cross whenever I mentioned it, that I learned to hold my tongue. At last, auntie smelt it, too, and that soon brought the men in! Ugh! Perhaps you've . . .

Manson—I have! But what has all this to do with . . .

Mary—Don't get impatient: it's all part of the story. . . . Well, we thought we should have poor dear Uncle William perfectly ill . . .

Manson—Because of the drain? . . .

Mary—No, because of the Fund. He tried everything: all his rich friends, bazaars, jumble-sales, special intercessions—everything! And nothing seemed to come of it! Then at last, yesterday morning, he was reading the newspaper, and there was a long piece about the Bishop of Benares. Uncle read it aloud to us. Suddenly, in the middle, he broke off and said: *Look at the power this chap seems to have at the back of him! I wish to God I had some of it!* He had scarcely said it, when there was a rat-tat at the door: it was the postman; and what do you think? IT WAS A LETTER FROM THE BISHOP OF BENARES!

Manson (*anticipating the critics*)—What a coincidence!

Mary—Isn't that wonderful? *Isn't* it just like a fairy-tale? Wait a bit. There's more yet. . . . Here's the letter: uncle gave it to me for my autographs. . . . [*She fishes it out from her pocket.* Manson *reads it aloud, slowly and clearly.*]

Manson—"*I shall be with you during to-morrow morning. If any one will help me, I will restore your church. Your brother, Joshua.*"

Mary (*pointing*)—And there, do you see, underneath, in brackets: *The Bishop of Benares.*

Manson—Dear me, dear me, just those few words!

Mary—Wasn't it like an answer to prayer? Auntie saw that at once! And the odd part about it is, that Uncle William *did* have a brother Joshua who went away and got lost in India years and years ago! And to think that he was *who* he was all the time! To think of him never writing until yesterday! To think that before the day is out he will be sitting down here, perhaps in this very place, just like . . . [*She breaks off suddenly, gazing at him; for his eyes have taken a strange fire.*]

Manson—Just like I am now. . . .

Mary (*falteringly*)—Yes. . . .

Manson—Talking to you. . . .

Mary—Oh! . . . [*She rises, afraid.*]

Manson (*softly*)—Mary . . .

Mary (*in a whisper*)—Who are you? . . .

Manson—I am . . . (*He is interrupted by the great bell of the church, which tolls the Sanctus. After the third stroke, he continues.*) I am the servant in this house. I have my work to do. Would you like to help me?

Mary—What shall I do?

Manson—Help to spin the fairy-tale. Will you?

Mary—I will.

Manson—Then keep the secret—Remember! And wish hard.

Mary—Do you believe in wishing?

Manson—Everything comes true, if you wish hard enough.

Mary—What shall I wish for?

Manson—What have you needed most? What have you not had? Think it out. [*Enter* Auntie *in a négligée morning gown. She has a preoccupied air. She carries her husband's coat over her arm.*]

Auntie—Oh, I heard you had arrived. I hope they gave you something to eat when you came in.

Manson—Thank you, ma'am: it will do later.

Auntie—Mary . . . Dearest . . .

Mary—Oh, I beg your pardon, auntie dear, I . . .

Auntie—Dreaming again! (*Putting her arm round her.*) Come, I want you to put your uncle's coat by the fire. He will be cold, coming out of that draughty church.

Mary (*hugging her*)—You darling! I believe you think of nobody but uncle in the world!

Auntie—And you, sweetheart: you come next—a very near next! Now, run along. (Mary *takes the coat to the fire. Surveying the table.*) That's very nice, Manson, very nice indeed! Perhaps, just a little further this way. . . . (*Removes flowers.*) My husband is so fond of them. Ye-es; and I *wanted* things *particularly* nice this morning . . .

Mary (*at the fire, looking up*)—I thought you said you—you didn't expect him till twelve-thirty! . . .

Auntie (*absorbed*)—Whom?

Mary (*chuckling*)—The—the Bishop of Benares.

Auntie—The—the . . . Oh, it's your *uncle* I am . . . (*To* Manson.) By-the-bye, has the postman been yet?

Manson (*at the window*)—I can see him coming up the lane. He's stopped at the next house.

Auntie—Oh, then, Mary, will you very much mind if you don't have breakfast with us this morning? I want to have a private talk with your uncle.

Mary—Oh, auntie, dear! . . .

Auntie—Don't think of yourself, dear—Remember, there are other people in the world besides you. Go down into the village, and have breakfast with poor old Grannie Durden. Take her some nice new-laid eggs and a pat of butter— Poor soul, it would be a charity!

MARY—Oh, auntie, she's as deaf as a post!

AUNTIE—Dearest!—Remember what your uncle said last Sunday about *Pure religion and undefiled!* He mentioned Mrs. Durden only a week ago; but I forgot. Now, run along.

MARY (*reluctantly*)—Very well, auntie. [*She goes out by the main door.*]

AUNTIE (*laughing*)—Inconsiderate little monkey! I am glad you have not thought of changing your pretty, native costume, Manson. It is very picturesque; and, besides, to-day there is a special reason why it may be considered complimentary. (*A double knock is heard at the outer door.*) Ah! Quick, Manson! The postman! [MANSON *goes out.* AUNTIE *takes a look at the coat: rearranges the flowers, humming, meanwhile, "The Church's One Foundation"; and then stands impatiently awaiting* MANSON'S *reappearance. Presently he returns with a letter on server.*]

MANSON—A letter for you, ma'am.

AUNTIE—Ah! What I expected! (*She breaks open the letter and reads it eagerly.*) Excellent! (*more dubiously.*) Excellent. . . . Manson, we shall have to be very busy to-day. There will be quite a Church Congress to lunch—two bishops!

MANSON—Oh, not as bad as that, ma'am!

AUNTIE—Manson!

MANSON—Beg pardon, ma'am; but master mentioned only one—his brother, the Bishop of Benares.

AUNTIE—*My* brother will join us also—the Bishop of Lancashire. This is his letter. And now let's have breakfast, at once. The vicar is sure to be earlier than he said; and I'm hungry. [MANSON *goes to the door. As he opens it, the* VICAR *and* ROGERS reappear.]

MANSON—Here is master. I'll hurry up the breakfast, ma'am.

VICAR (*entering*)—Do, Manson. Let's get it over. (MANSON *goes out.*) Excuse me, my dear. (ROGERS *helps him off with the cassock.*) So tiresome! Not a place in the house to do anything! Confound the drains! Just run up-stairs for my coat, Rogers.

AUNTIE—It's here, dear. I have it warming for you.

VICAR (*more graciously*)—Oh, thank you, Martha. That will do, then, Rogers. Tell Manson to hurry up. [ROGERS *helps him on and goes out. The cassock is left lying on the long stool by the window. The* VICAR *crosses moodily to the fireplace.* AUNTIE *stands undecided, watching him, the letter in her hand.*)

AUNTIE—You're back early, dear.

VICAR—What can you expect? Not a soul there, of course!

AUNTIE—My poor William! I'm glad I thought to hurry up the breakfast.

VICAR—Thanks, dear. You are always thoughtful.

AUNTIE—William . . . (*He looks up.*) I—I want to have a little talk with you.

VICAR—What is it? Any more—worry?

AUNTIE—You needn't make it so.

VICAR—Ah!

AUNTIE (*moving over to him and stroking his hair*)—My dearest is not well.

VICAR—I think you are right, Martha. I am *not* well.

AUNTIE (*alarmed*)—Not the trouble with your heart again?

VICAR—No; I fancy it goes deeper than that!

AUNTIE—William! What do you mean?

VICAR (*suddenly facing her*)—Martha! Do you know the sort of man you have been living with all these years? Do you see through me? Do you know me?—No: don't speak: I see your answer already—Your own love blinds you! Ha! I am a *good man!*—I don't drink, I don't swear, I am respectable, I don't blaspheme like Bletchley! Oh yes, and I am a *scholar:* I can cackle in Greek: I can wrangle about God's name: I know Latin and Hebrew and all the cursed little pedantries of my trade! But do you know what I am? Do you know what your husband is in the sight of God? He is a LIAR!

AUNTIE—William!

VICAR—A liar! I heard it in my ears as I stood up before Christ's altar in the church this morning, reciting my miserable creed! I heard it in my prayers! I heard it whilst I tasted . . . whilst I drank . . . whilst I . . . [*He sinks into a chair, and buries his face in his hands.*]

AUNTIE—Oh, you are ill!

VICAR (*breaking down*)—O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? [*She stands above him, hesitating. After a moment, she says, determinedly.*]

AUNTIE—I know: it's this money trouble. It's what Joshua said in his letter about your having to get somebody to help him. Well, that's just what I wanted to speak to you about. I have a way out of the difficulty.

VICAR—It's not the church. I could wish every stone of it were crumbled into dust!

AUNTIE—William, how wicked of you! . . . Is it—is it anything to do with your brother Joshua? Why don't you answer.

VICAR—*It has to do with my brother—Robert.*

AUNTIE—Mary's fa . . . William, did you send him that telegram yesterday?

VICAR—Yes: that was a lie, too!

AUNTIE—Nonsense! Don't be absurd!

VICAR—It was a lie!

AUNTIE—You told him we couldn't do with him because the house was upset: that's true! You told him that the drains were up in the study: that's true!

VICAR—Was that the real reason why we refused to have him here? Was it?

AUNTIE—I can't think what possessed him to write and say he'd come. We've not heard from him for fifteen years!

VICAR—Whose fault is that?

AUNTIE—Why, his own, of course! He can't expect to be treated decently! (*She walks up and down with anger.*) It's perfectly absurd, it really is, dear, making all this fuss and trouble about a wretched— Have you told Mary?

VICAR—No: the *silent* lie was comparatively easy!

AUNTIE—My dear, do try and be reasonable. Think of what he is!

VICAR—Isn't he my brother?

AUNTIE—No, he's not your brother—at least, nothing that a brother ought to be! Ridicules everything that you hold sacred! Hates everything you love! Loves everything you hate! . . .

VICAR—*That's* true!

AUNTIE—A scoffer, an atheist, a miserable drunkard!

VICAR—That was fifteen years ago, remember, after Mary's mother died! . . .

AUNTIE—A man like that never changes! What would have become of that poor child if we hadn't stepped in? Have you ever dared to tell her what her father's like? Of course not! To-day, too, of all days! It's utterly preposterous!

VICAR—That is all the more reason why . . .

AUNTIE—My dear, think of his *occupation!*

VICAR—I think the child ought to be told.

AUNTIE—Of his *occupation?*

VICAR—That, and everything.

Auntie—My dear, have you gone perfectly mad? Do you know who's coming? Do you want to advertise his *occupation* to all the world?

Vicar—Do you think his brother Joshua would mind that?

Auntie—It isn't only your brother Joshua! You think of nobody but your brother Joshua! Some one else is coming.

Vicar—Who?

Auntie—*My brother James!* (*She throws down the letter.*) Now you've heard it all! [*There is a long silence. Then the* Vicar *speaks in a low, intense voice of bitter contempt.*]

Vicar—Your brother James is coming here today? You have brought him here to help my brother Joshua! *Him!*

Auntie—Why not? He's rich! He can do it!

Vicar—So, he can recognize me at last!

Auntie—It was as much your fault as his, that you have never met! He naturally resented our marriage.

Vicar (*ironically*)—But, of course, now that I'm related to the great and *wealthy* Bishop of Benares . . .

Auntie (*warmly*)—He's as much a bishop as your brother is!

Vicar—He! That gaitered snob!

Auntie—William, how dare you!

Vicar—Yes, he's a bishop! A bishop of stocks and shares! A bishop of the counting-house! A bishop of Mammon!

Auntie—William!

Vicar—The devil's own bishop!

Auntie—*At least, he isn't a* working-man!

Vicar (*as though stung*)—Ah! . . . [*They stand below the table, one on either side, tense with passion. They remain so.* Manson *and* Rogers *come in with the breakfast.* Rogers *goes out immediately.*]

Manson—Sorry to have delayed, sir; but you said a quarter to nine, didn't you, sir?

Vicar—Yes.

Manson—Breakfast's served, ma'am. It's served, sir. (*They move to the table, absently, first one, then the other, as he goes to each separately.* Manson *serves them in silence for a few moments.*) Beg pardon, sir: what time did you expect the Bishop of Benares?

Vicar—Oh!—*During the morning*, he said. That will mean the twelve-thirty, I suppose. It's the only convenient service.

Manson—And the Bishop of Lancashire, ma'am?

Auntie—He didn't say; but I think we may expect him by the same train. He would scarcely think of catching the . . . (*There is heard a loud Ringing of the Bell—a bishop at the very least. All three heads turn automatically.*) Good gracious! Already!

Manson—It doesn't sound like the Bishop of Benares, ma'am. He generally comes very quietly.

Auntie—Quick!

Manson—Yes, ma'am. [*He goes out by the main door.*]

Auntie (*rapidly*)—William, I'm sorry! Really, I didn't mean you: I never thought of you: I was only thinking of Robert. I only think of you as a great scholar and a saint—yes, you are one!—and as the man I love! I would sacrifice everything to your happiness. Robert's nothing to me: that's why I . . . Think of what it might mean to Mary—we must think of others, William!—our own little child, as we try to imagine . . . (*The* Vicar *makes a gesture of anguish.*) As for James, God knows I did it for the best. I love you, my dear, I love you: I wouldn't have vexed you for the world! After all, he *is* my brother, William! . . . I thought of patching up the enmity between you: I thought of all your hopes of rebuilding the church; and James was the only rich man I thought might be induced—under the circumstances . . .

Vicar—I am in the darkness. I don't know what to do. God has left me stranded. [Manson *re-enters. They look at him inquiringly.*]

Manson—It isn't the Bishop of Benares, ma'am.

Auntie—Well, who is it?

Manson—I didn't ask his name, ma'am.

Auntie—T-t-t! How is he dressed?

Manson—Rather oddly, ma'am; I noticed that his legs . . .

Auntie—William, it's James! I can't be seen like this. Shew him in. I can slip out this way. (Manson *goes out.*) William, try and treat him like . . .

Vicar—How? Like a brother?

Auntie—I was going to say, like a Priest and a Christian, William.

Vicar—Like a Christian, then.

Auntie—My dear! [*She goes out by the door to the right, as* Manson *begins to turn the handle of the other door.*]

Manson (*outside*)—This way, if you please. [*The* Vicar *braces himself up and turns toward the door with an effort at cordiality.*]

Vicar—Just in time for breakfast, my lord. [*Enter* Robert Smith *and* Manson. Robert's *costume is a navvy's, the knees tied with string.*]

Robert (*grimly*)—Thanks, Bill Awlmighty, don't mind if I do. My belly's fair aching.

Vicar—Robert!

Robert—Yus, it's me, my 'oly brother!

Vicar—Didn't you—didn't you get my wire?

Robert—Yus, I gorit: *Drains wrong*, eh? Thought I'd like to 'av' a look at 'em—my job, yer know, *drains!* So you'll excuse the togs: remind you of old days, eh what?

Vicar—Robert, what have you come here for?

Robert—*You* arsk me that?

Vicar—Yes, I do, Bob . . .

Robert—Why, to see my little gel, o' course—Gawd curse you! . . . Now go an tell your ole woman. (*The* Vicar *stands as though stricken.*) Did you 'ear me speak? Tell 'er! (*The* Vicar *wavers a moment, and then staggers out silently through the door, right.* Robert *watches him off with a look of iron. He pays no heed to* Manson, *who stands quite close to him, on the left.*) See that blighter? That's the bloke as was born with no bowels! 'E might a-made a man o' me once, if 'e'd tried; but 'e didn't—'im and 'is like. Hm! Dam foolish, I call it, don't you?

Manson—Yes, both: foolish and—damned! [Robert *turns and looks into his face for the first time as the curtain slowly falls on the First Act.*]

THE SECOND ACT

(*As the curtain rises, the scene and situation remain unchanged. Presently, Robert, having completed his inspection of the other's face and costume, moves away with a characteristic interjection.*)

Robert—Oh, Jeeroosalem! . . . 'Ere, 'elp us orf, comride: I'm wet through. Rainin' cats an' dorgs dahn at the Junction! 'Ere, I cawn't . . . Wot oh! The very identical! . . . (Manson *has helped him off with his coat, and now hands him the cassock. Getting into it.*) Don't know oo you are, ole pal; but you're a bit of orl right! . . . Don't I look a corf-drop? 'Ere, where ye teking it to? . . . (*He watches* Manson *suspiciously as he places his coat before the fire to dry.*) Bit 'andy, ain't yer? . . .

So this is where 'e lives! A bloomin palace, as never I *did* see! . . . (Manson *prepares a place for him at the table, and pours out a cup of tea, etc.*) Right you are, ole comride! 'E said breakfast, an' breakfast it shall be, I don't fink! Blimey! Sossingers! Ain't 'ad the taste of sossingers in my gizzard for I don't know 'ow long! (*He sits and devours whilst* Manson *breaks and hands him bread, waiting upon him.*) (*Between bites.*) Wouldn't think as I was 'is brother, would yer—not to look at me? But strooth, *I am;* an' wot's more, 'e cawn't deny it! . . . (*He labours with a little joke.*) There's a lot o' brothers knockin' abaht as people don't know on, eh what? See wot I mean? (*Suddenly serious.*) Not as I'm one o' them sort, mind yer: my father married my mother honest, same as I married my little . . . (*After a moment's reflection, he makes fresh onslaught upon the sausages. Presently he looks up.*) 'Ere, ain't you goin' ter 'av' none? . . . Cawn't yer speak?

Manson—Yes.

Robert—Well, why cawn't yer arnser a bloke when 'e arsks yer civil?

Manson—You didn't make it clear that you wanted to eat with me.

Robert—Want a bit of 'eart in it, eh?

Manson—Yes, that's all.

Robert (*largely*)—Sit dahn, ole pal! Mek yourself at 'ome! (Manson *obeys.*) See, wot was I tawkin' abaht, just afore you turned narsty?

Manson—You were going to say something about—your little girl's mother. [Robert's *cutlery bristles up like bayonets.*]

Robert—Look 'ere, mate, don't you come tryin' it on with me! I don't care *oo* you are!

Manson—I know that.

Robert—Then let me be, I tell yer! You tek all the taste out o' my sossingers.

Manson—I should like to hear about her, comrade.

Robert—*You* cawn't bring 'er back. She's dead.

Manson—What was her name?

Robert—Mary—same as the little gel's.

Manson—I wonder whether they are anything alike.

Robert—That's wot I come to see! . . . She 'ad 'er mother's nose when she was a biby—*and* 'er eyes! Gorstrike, she was the very spit—far as a biby could be! . . . Swelp me Moses, if I find 'er anything like Bill's ole geezer, I'll cut 'er throat!

Manson—And if she's like her mother? What then?

Robert—Why, then . . . there's allus my own. I nearly did it once.

Manson (*after a pause*)—How did you come to lose her?

Robert (*roughly*)—Never you mind!

Manson—How did you come to lose her?

Robert (*sullenly*)—Typhoid fever. (Manson *notes the evasion with a glance. He helps* Robert *to more tea, and waits for him to speak.* Robert *wriggles under his gaze, and at last he says, reluctantly.*) Oh, it was my own fault, as I lost *the kid!*

Manson—That was a sore loss, comrade.

Robert—*I* know it! Needn't rub it in! . . . Look 'ere, comride, I 'adn't a bad nature to begin with. Didn't me an' my brother Joshua pinch an' slave the skin orf our bones to send that spotted swine to school? Didn't we 'elp 'im out with 'is books an' 'is mortar-boards an' 'is bits of clothes to try an' mek 'im look respectable? That's wot *we* did, till 'e got 'is lousy scholyships, an' run away to get spliced with that she-male pup of a blood-'ound! Cos why? Cos we was proud of the little perisher! —proud of 'is 'ead-piece! We 'adn't gone none ourselves—leastways, *I* 'adn't: Joshua was different to me; and now . . .

Manson—And your brother Joshua: what of him? Where is *he* now?

Robert—I don't know—gone to pot, like me! P'r'aps eatin' is bleedin' 'eart out, same as I am, at the base ingratitood of the world!

Manson—Perhaps so!

Robert—Where was I? You mek me lose my air, shoving in with your bit!

Manson—You were saying that you hadn't a bad nature to begin with.

Robert (*truculently*)—No more I 'adn't! . . . O' course, when she took an'—an' died, things was different: I couldn't 'old up the same— Some'ow, I don't know, I lost my 'eart, and . . .

Manson—Yes? . . .

Robert—That's 'ow I come to lose my kid, my little kid. . . . Mind you, that was fifteen years ago: I was a rotter then, same as you might be. I wasn't 'arf the man I am now . . . *You* can larf! A man can change a lot in fifteen years!

Manson—*I* didn't laugh.

Robert—Do you want to know wot's come over me since then? I *work*—and work well: that's more than some of 'em can say— And I don't get much money for it, either! That ought to mek 'em feel ashamed! I'm not the drunkard I was—not by 'arf! If I'm bitter, oo's made me bitter? You cawn't be very sweet and perlite on eighteen bob a week—*when yer get it!* I'll tell yer summat else: I've eddicated myself since then—I'm not the gory fool I was— *And* they know it! They can't come playin' the 'anky with us, same as they used to! It's *Nice Mister Working-man This and Nice Mister Working-man That, will yer be so 'ighly hobliging as to 'and over your dear little voting-paper*—you poor, sweet, muddy-nosed old idiot, as can't spot your natural enemy when yer see 'im! That orter mek some on 'em sit up! Fifteen years ago me an' my like 'adn't got a religion! By Gawd, we 'av' one now! Like to 'ear wot it is?

Manson—Yes.

Robert—Socialism! Funny, ain't it?

Manson—*I* don't think so. It's mine, too.

Robert—I believe in fighting with my clarss!

Manson—Oh, against whom?

Robert—Why, agin all the other clarsses—curse 'em!

Manson—Isn't that a bit of the old Robert left, comrade?

Robert—Oh, leave me alone. I cawn't be allus pickin' an' choosin' my words! I ain't no scholar—thank Gawd!

Manson—All the same, I'm right, eh, comrade? Comrade . . .

Robert (*grudgingly*)—Well, yus! (*Savagely.*) Yus, I tell yer! Cawn't a bloke speak 'otter than 'e means without *you* scrapin' at 'is innards? (*Exploding again.*) Wait till I set eyes on that bleedin' brother of mine again, that's all!

Manson—Which bleeding brother?

Robert (*with a thumb-jerk*)—Why, *'im*, o' course! (*Sneering.*) The Reverend William! 'Im as you said was damned! . . . Allus did 'ate parsons! I 'ates the sight of their 'arf-baked, silly mugs! (*There is a very loud ringing of the bell.*) 'Ello! 'Ello! Did I mek a row like that?

Manson—You tried, didn't you?

Robert—So I did, not 'arf! Thought if I kicked up an 'ell of a shindy they'd think some big bug was comin'; and then when they'd be all smiles an' bowin' an' scrapin', in pops me, real low! [Rogers *enters. On seeing them at the table, he is apparently troubled with his inside.*]

Rogers—Oh, my 'oly Evings!

Manson—Who is it, Rogers?

Rogers (*awed*)—It's the Bishop of Lancashire!

Manson (*imperturbably*)—Shew him in, Rogers.

Rogers—Beg pardon, Mr. Manson . . .

Manson—I said, shew him in. Quick, Rogers. Keep a bishop waiting!

Rogers—Well, I'm jiggered! [*He is; and goes out.*]

Robert—'Ere! Did 'e say *bishop?*

Manson—Yes.

Robert—Comin' 'ere? Now? (Manson *nods his head to each inquiry.*) Well, I ain't agoin' ter leave my sossingers, not if 'e was a bloomin' archangel, see! (Rogers, *still jiggered, ushers in* James Ponsonby Makeshyfte, D.D., *the Most Reverend Lord Bishop of Lancashire. He looks his name, his goggles and ear-trumpet lending a beautiful perfection to the resemblance.* Manson *has risen:* Robert, *imperturable, discusses sossingers:* Rogers, *with a last excruciation of his ailment, vanishes. The Most Reverend Father in God stands blinking for recognition. Pained at the non-fulfilment of this worthy expectation, he moves—a little blindly—toward the table. Here he encounters the oppugnant back of the voracious* Robert, *who grows quite annoyed. Indeed, he as good as says so.*) 'Ere, where ye comin' to?

Bishop (*peering closely into his face, the other edging away*)—Ah! Mr. Smythe, or I am mistaken.

Robert—Smith's my name! Don't you call me Smythe!

Bishop—My dear sir, don't mention it: my sister has explained everything. I bear you no grudge—none whatever!

Robert—What's the silly ole josser jawin' abaht now?

Bishop—But I perceive that I have—er—(*sniffing*) disturbed you at your morning meal . . .

Robert (*with conviction*)—You 'av' that!

Bishop—Eh? . . .

Robert (*louder*)—I say, you 'av'!

Bishop (*fixing his ear-trumpet*)—Just once more . . .

Robert—Oh, Moses! (*Roaring, and indicating his breakfast.*) You 'av', blarst you!

Bishop (*mistaking the gesticulation*) —Thank you, you are very kind. I think I will. I could get nothing on the journey but a cup of coffee and a bun. [*He sits at the table without ever having perceived* Manson, *who has nevertheless been serving him.*]

Robert—Yus, you look as if you fed on buns! [*Throughout the play the audience will understand where the* Bishop *does, and where he does not, hear by his use or non-use of the ear-trumpet. Perhaps the reader will be good enough to imagine these occasions for himself, as he may have observed a reluctance on the part of the author to encumber the text with stage directions.*)

Bishop (*eating, and at the same time addressing the becassocked* Robert)—And you must not think, on account of the little coolness between us, that I have not followed your career with great interest—very great interest! Your scholastic achievements have been most praiseworthy—especially under the unfortunate circumstances . . . . Although, by-the-way, I cannot at all agree with your gloss on Romans fourteen, twenty-three: *Katakekritai* either means *damned* or nothing at all.

Robert (*gesticulating*)—It was *'im* as said *damned!*

Bishop—No, no, sir: it is perfectly indefensible!

Robert—I'll use what langwidge I like!

Bishop (*warming*)—You said *katakekritai* . . .

Robert—I never did, I tek my oath!

Bishop—My dear sir, I learned my Greek at Shrewsbury, before you were born! Don't argue, sir!

Robert—Oo is argufying? . . . Talking to me about yer Katama-what-d'you-call-it!

Bishop—We had better drop the subject! . . . Bœotian! After all, it is not precisely the matter which has brought us together. And that reminds me . . .(*Trumpet.*) Has he come yet?

Robert—Oo?

Bishop—Your brother, of course.

Robert—My brother! Oh, you'll see *'im* soon enough!

Bishop—I gather from your remark that he has not arrived yet. Good! The fact is, I should like a preliminary discussion with yourself before meeting your illustrious brother.

Robert—Then you'd better look slippy!

Bishop—I beg your pardon? . . .

Robert (*with a flap at the trumpet*)—Go on: you 'eard.

Bishop—Of course, the *financial* undertaking is considerable: it's not like an *investment*, where there is some reasonable hope of a return: it's merely a matter of charity! The money's—gone, so to speak.

Robert—Yus, I've noticed that about money, myself.

Bishop—At the same time, I should like my *name* to be associated with your brother's, in so worthy an enterprise . . .

Robert (*mildly sarcastic*)—You don't say!

Bishop—And then again, I *trust*—I say I *trust*—I am not impervious to the more sacred obligations involved; but . . . [*He gropes blindly for bread.*]

Robert—I allus notice that sort of 'igh talk ends with a "but" . . .

Bishop—Naturally, I should like to learn a little, beforehand, of your brother's *views*. From what I gather, they are not altogether likely to coincide with my own. Of course, he is an idealist, a dreamer. Now, under these circumstances, perhaps . . . Eh, what— Oh! Bless my soul! (Manson *has been offering him bread for some time. He has just tumbled to the fact of his presence. He rises.*) My—my Brother from Benares, I presume?

Robert—What, *my* pal, 'is brother! Oh, Je'oshaphat!

Bishop—Ten thousand pardons! Really, my eyesight is deplorable! Delighted to meet you! . . . I was just observing to our charming host that—er— Humph! . . . Bless me! Now what *was* I . . .

Manson—Something about your sacred obligations, I believe.

Bishop—May I trouble you again? [Manson *gravely fixes the ear-trumpet in his ear.*]

Robert—That's right: stick the damned thing in 'is ear-'ole, comride!

Manson (*through the trumpet*)—Your sacred obligations.

Bishop—Precisely, precisely! Er— Shall we sit? (*They do so. The* Bishop *looks to* Manson *to begin.* Manson *failing him, the spirit begins to work within himself.*) Well—er—speaking of that, of course, my dearly-beloved brother, I feel very seriously on the matter, *very* seriously—as I am sure you do. The restoration of a church is a tremendous, an overwhelming responsibility. To begin with, it—it costs quite a lot. Doesn't it?

Manson.—It does: quite a lot.

Bishop—Hm, yes—yes! . . . You mentioned *Sacred obligations* just now, and I think that on the whole I am inclined to agree with you. It is an admirable way of putting it. We must awaken people to a sense of their *sacred obligations.* This is a work in which everybody can do something: the rich man can give of the abundance with which it has pleased Providence specially to favour him: the poor man with his slender savings need have no fear for the poverty of his gift— Let him give all: it will be accepted. Those of us who, like yourself, my dear brother—and I say it in all modesty, perhaps *myself*—are in possession of the endowments of learning, of influence, of authority—we can lend our *names* to the good work. As you say so very beautifully: *sacred obligations.* By-the-way, I don't think I quite caught your views as to the probable cost. Eh, what do you think?

Manson—I think that should depend upon the obligations; and then, of course, the sacredness might count for something.

Bishop—Yes, yes, we've discussed all that. But bringing it down to a *practical* basis: how much could we manage with?

Manson—What do you say to—everything you have?

Bishop—My dear sir, I'm not talking about myself!

Manson—Well—everything the others have?

Bishop—My dear sir, they're not fools! Do discuss the matter like a man of the world!

Manson—*God's not watching: let's give as little, and grab as much as we can!*

Bishop—Ssh! My dear brother! Remember who's present! (*He glances toward Robert.*) However . . . (*Coughs.*) We will return to this later. I begin to understand you.

Robert—Yus: you *think* you do!

Bishop—At the same time, I do think we ought to come to some general understanding: we must count the cost. Now, from all accounts, *you* have had some experience of church-building out in India—not that I think the extravagance for which you are credited would be either possible or desirable in this country—oh, no! Thank God, we know how to worship in spirit and in truth, without the aid of expensive buildings! However, I should like to hear your views. How did you manage it?

Manson—Sacrifice.

Bishop—Of course, of course; but *practically.* They say it's an enormous concern!

Manson—So it is.

Bishop—Well, what would such an establishment as that represent? In round numbers, now?

Manson (*calmly*)—Numberless millions.

Bishop—Numberless mil . . . ! (*He drops his fork.*) My dear sir, absurd! . . . Why, the place must be a palace—fit for a king!

Manson—It is!

Bishop—Do you mean to tell me that one man alone, on his own naked credit, could obtain numberless millions for such an object as that? How could you possibly get them together?

Manson—They came freely from every quarter of the world.

Bishop—On the security of your own name alone?

Manson—No other, I assure you.

Bishop—For Heaven's sake, tell me all about it! What sort of a place is it?

Manson (*seriously*)—Are you quite sure you can hear?

Bishop—Perhaps your voice is *not* quite so clear as it was. However . . . (*He wipes the inside of the ear-trumpet, and fixes it afresh.*) Now! Tell me about your church. [*During the following speech the* Bishop *is occupied with his own thoughts: after the first few words he makes no attempt at listening: indeed, the trumpet goes down to the table again in no time. On the other hand,* Robert, *at first apathetic, gradually awakens to the keenest interest in what* Manson *says.*]

Manson (*very simply*)—I am afraid you may not consider it an altogether substantial concern. It has to be seen in a certain way, under certain conditions. Some people never *see* it at all. You must understand, this is no dead pile of stones and unmeaning timber. *It is a living thing.*

Bishop (*in a hoarse whisper, self-engrossed*)—Numberless millions!

Manson—When you enter it you hear a sound—a sound as of some mighty poem chanted. Listen long enough, and you will learn that it is made up of the beating of human hearts, of the nameless music of men's souls—that is, if you have ears. If you have eyes, you will presently see the church itself—a looming mystery of many shapes and shadows, leaping sheer from floor to dome. The work of no ordinary builder!

Bishop (*trumpet down*)—On the security of one man's name!

Manson—The pillars of it go up like the brawny trunks of heroes: the sweet human flesh of men and women is moulded about its bulwarks, strong, impregnable: the faces of little children laugh out from every corner-stone: the terrible spans and arches of it are the joined hands of comrades; and up in the heights and spaces there are inscribed the numberless musings of all the dreamers of the world. It is yet building—building and built upon. Sometimes the work goes forward in deep darkness: sometimes in blinding light: now beneath the burden of unutterable anguish: now to the tune of a great laughter and heroic shoutings like the cry of thunder. (*Softer.*) Sometimes, in the silence of the nighttime, one may hear the tiny hammerings of the comrades at work up in the dome—the comrades that have climbed ahead. [*There is a short silence, broken only by the champing jaws of the* Bishop, *who has resumed his sausages.* Robert *speaks first.*]

Robert (*slowly*)—I think I begin to understand you, comride: especially that bit abaht . . .(*his eyes stray upward*) . . . the 'ammerins' an' the—the harches—an' . . . Humph! I'm only an 'og! . . . S'pose there's no drain 'ands wanted in that there church o' yours?

Manson—Drains are a very important question there at present.

Robert—Why, I'd be cussin' over every stinkin' pipe I laid.

Manson—I should make that a condition, comrade.

Robert (*rising, he pulls off the cassock; goes to fire for his coat: returns: drags it on*)—I don't know! Things 'av' got in a bit of a muck with me! I'm rather like a drain-pipe myself. (*With sudden inspiration.*) There's one thing I *can* do!

Manson—What's that?

Robert—Renahnce ole Beelzebub an' all 'is bloomin' wirks! 'And us that brarss-band! (*He alludes to the ear-trumpet.* Manson *obeying,* Robert *jabs it into the ear of the* Bishop, *who seems quite surprised.*) 'Ere! 'Av' you ever 'eard of 'ell?

Bishop—Of what?

Robert—'Ell. (*Spelling.*) H, E, double L, 'ell.

Bishop—Well, my dear sir, I think I ought to!

Robert—Then, go there! Aymen . . . Now I'll go an' 'av' a look at our Bill's drains, damn 'is eyes! [*He goes out through the main door, repentant.*]

Bishop—The scoundrel! Did you hear what he said? I shall certainly report him to his bishop!

Manson—I don't think I should. *His* bishop doesn't mind a little plain speech now and again.

Bishop—A little plain speech! Do you think it's right for a clergyman to—to direct me to perdition?

MANSON—I think you are making a mistake: the man who gave you your—direction is not a clergyman. He's a scavenger.

BISHOP—A scavenger!

MANSON—Yes—looks after drains.

BISHOP—Do you mean to tell me that I've been sitting down to breakfast with a common working-man?

MANSON—Yes; have you never done that before?

BISHOP—My dear sir, whatever do you take me for?

MANSON—A bishop of God's church.

BISHOP—Precisely! Is it *your* custom to breakfast with working-men?

MANSON—Every morning. You see, I'm prejudiced: I was one myself, once.

BISHOP—You? . . .

MANSON—Yes—a long time ago, though: people have forgotten.

BISHOP—But, my dear brother, I am perfectly sure you never told people to go to . . .

MANSON—Oh, yes. quite frequently: it would shock you to learn the language I really did use. Perhaps, under the circumstances, it might be advisable to drop the subject at this point.

BISHOP (*emphatically*)—I most certainly agree with you there! After all, it is a digression from the purpose for which we are here! . . . Let me see, then: where were we? . . . Oh, yes, I remember—Although, by the way, it was very ill-advised of you to speak your mind so openly in that man's presence! However . . . To resume our—how shall I call it?—our—little understanding, eh?

MANSON—That describes it most accurately.

BISHOP—Now, you said, *Let's give as little, and grab as much as we can.* Of course, that is a playful way of putting it; but between ourselves, it expresses my sentiments exactly.

MANSON—I knew that when I said it.

BISHOP (*delighted*)—My dear brother, your comprehension makes my heart warm. I trust our relations may always remain as warm.

MANSON—Oh, warmer, warmer!

BISHOP—Very well then, to business! I tell you, candidly, I agree with you, that there is no necessity for sinking anything of our own in the concern: nothing ever comes of that sort of reckless generosity! If people want a church, let them make some sacrifice for it! Why should *we* do anything? I am sure you will appreciate my candour?

MANSON—At its full value. Go on.

BISHOP—At the same time, there is no reason why we should throw cold water upon the project. On the contrary, we might promote it, encourage it, even lend it the influence of our patronage and our names. *But on one understanding!*

MANSON—And that?

BISHOP—That it is extended—imperialized, so to speak: that it is made the vehicle of a much vaster, of a much more momentous project behind it!

MANSON—You interest me intensely. Explain.

BISHOP—I will. (*He looks around to assure himself that they are alone.*) There is in existence a society, a very influential society, in which I happen to have an interest—very great interest. Hm! I am one of the directors. I may say that it is already very well established, financially; but it is always open to consider the—extension of its influence in that way.

MANSON—And the name of the society?

BISHOP—Rather long, but I trust explicit. It is called "*The Society for the Promotion and Preservation of Emoluments for the Higher Clergy.*"

MANSON—I do not seem to have heard it *named* before.

BISHOP—Well, no: its movements have always been characterized by a certain modesty. It is an invisible society, so to speak; but I can assure you its principles are very clearly understood—among the parties most concerned.

MANSON—And your project?

BISHOP—Affiliate the subsidiary question of the building of the Church, with the larger interests of the Society.

MANSON—Yes, but since people have already refused to subscribe to the more trivial project . . .

BISHOP—They have not been properly approached. My dear sir, in order to awaken public generosity, it is necessary to act like men of the world: *we must have names.* People will subscribe to any amount, if you can only get the right names. That is where *you* come in.

MANSON—I! Do you propose to place *my* name at the head of your —prospectus?

BISHOP—My dear sir, invaluable! Didn't you say yourself that you brought in numberless millions, on your own credit, out there in India? Why shouldn't you do the same in England? Think of your reputation, your achievements, your name for sanctity— Not a word, sir: I *mean* it! . . . Why, there's no end to the amount it would bring in: it would mean billions! Well, what do you say?

MANSON (*slowly*)—Let us clearly understand one another. I am to lend you my name—just my name—and you are to do all the rest.

BISHOP (*quickly*)—Oh yes: I'd *rather* you kept out of the business negotiations!

MANSON—It is rather a dangerous name to play with!

BISHOP—I take that responsiblity entirely upon myself!

MANSON—And when all's over and done with, what are we going to gain out of the transaction?

BISHOP—We shall have to come to some private settlement between ourselves.

MANSON—When?

BISHOP—Oh, hereafter.

MANSON—Hereafter, then. [*Enter* AUNTIE *and* VICAR *by door to right.*]

AUNTIE (*off*)—Leave him to me, William! I'll soon settle the matter! (*Entering.*) The man must be possessed of some evil spirit! . . . Why—it's my brother James! . . . [MANSON *has risen, and is now the butler once more. He speaks into the ear-trumpet.*]

MANSON—Your sister and the vicar, my lord.

BISHOP (*behind table, rising*)—Ah! Well, Martha! —No, no, no, if you please! (*He restrains her approach.*) Observe the retribution of an unchastened will. You have never seen my face for sixteen years! However, like a cloud, I blot out your transgressions from this hour! And so this is your husband?—Not a word, sir; not a single word! —the sausages were delicious, and your place has been most agreeably occupied by your brother!

VICAR—My brother! Then you . . . What do you mean?

BISHOP (*testily*)—I mean what I say, sir! Your brother, *my* brother, *our* brother here, of course, our Oriental brother!

AUNTIE—James, you are making a mistake: this is our new butler—our *Indian* butler.

BISHOP—Your Indian—what? [*He stands cogitating horribly until the end of the act, facing toward* MANSON.]

AUNTIE—What has made him like this? He seems possessed!

MANSON—He is! . . . I have just been having some trouble with *another* devil, ma'am.

AUNTIE—Meaning, of course . . . What has become of him?

MANSON (*with his eye*)—*He* is cast out forever.

AUNTIE—Where is he now?

MANSON—He walks through dry places seeking—(*he probes her soul*)—*other* habitations.

AUNTIE—Manson! This is your doing! Oh, you have saved us!

MANSON—I am trying to, ma'am; but, God knows, you make it rather difficult! [*A change comes over her face, as the curtain slowly falls.*]

THE THIRD ACT

(*As the curtain rises, the scene and situation remain unchanged; but attention now centres in the Bishop, who appears to be struggling apoplectically for speech.*)

BISHOP (*bursting*)—Before we proceed a step further, I have a most extraordinary request to make! The fact is, you interrupted me in the middle of a most engrossing spiritual discussion with my . . . that is to say, with your . . . in short, *with that person standing over there!* My request is, that I be permitted a few minutes, further conversation with him—alone, and at once!

ALL } With Manson! . . .
MANSON } With me! . . .

BISHOP—Not a word! I know my request will appear singular—most singular! But I assure you it is most necessary. The peace, the security of a human soul depends upon it! Come, sir! Where shall we go?

MANSON—Have I your permission, ma'am?

AUNTIE—Certainly; but it is most extraordinary!

MANSON (*crossing*)—Then I think this way, my lord, in the drawing-room . . . [*He leads the way.*]

BISHOP (*following*)—And you may be sure, my good fellow, I will give anything—I say, anything—to remedy your misapprehensions! Hm! [*They go into the drawing-room, right,* MANSON *holding the door for the other to pass.*]

VICAR—Martha! It's no use! I can't do it!

AUNTIE (*preoccupied*)—Can't do what, William?

VICAR—Behave toward that man like a Christian! He stirs some nameless devil like murder in my heart! I want to clutch him by the throat, as I would some noisome beast, and strangle him!

AUNTIE (*slowly*)—He is greatly changed!

VICAR—It is you who have changed, Martha. You see him now with different eyes.

AUNTIE—Do I? I wonder! . . .

VICAR—After all, why should we invite him here? Why should we be civil to him? What possible kinship can there be between us? As for his filthy money—how did he scrape it together? How did he come by it? . . .

AUNTIE—Yes, William, that's true, but the opportunity of turning it to God's service . . .

VICAR—Do you think any blessing is going to fall upon a church whose every stone is reeking with the bloody sweat and anguish of the human creatures whom the wealth of men like that has driven to despair? Shall we base God's altar in the bones of harlots, plaster it up with the slime of sweating-dens and slums, give it over for a gaming-table to the dice of gamblers and of thieves?

AUNTIE—Why will you exaggerate, my dear?—It is not as bad as that. Why don't you compose yourself and try and be contented and—and happy?

VICAR—How can I be happy, and that man poisoning the air I breathe?

AUNTIE—You are not always like this, dear! . . .

VICAR—Happy! How can I be happy, and my brother Robert what I have made him!

AUNTIE—We are not talking of Robert: we are talking of *you!* Think of our love, William—our great and beautiful love! Isn't that something to make you happy?

VICAR—Our love? It's well you mention it. That question had better be faced, too! Our love! Well, what of it? What is love?

AUNTIE—Oh, William you *know* . . .

VICAR—Is love a murderer? Does love go roaming about the world like Satan, to slay men's souls?

AUNTIE—Oh, now you're exaggerating again! What do you mean?

VICAR—I mean my brother Robert! What has love done for him?

AUNTIE—Oh, Robert, Robert—I'm sick to death of Robert! Why can't you think of yourself?

VICAR—Well, I will! What has love done for *me?*

AUNTIE—William! . . . [*The slightest pause. The scene takes on another complexion.*]

VICAR—Do you remember that day when I first came to you and told you of my love? Did I lie to you? Did I try to hide things? Did I despise my birth? Did *you?*

AUNTIE—No, no, William, I loved you: I told you so.

VICAR—Did you mind the severance from your family because of me?

AUNTIE—Didn't I always say that I was proud to be able to give up so much for you, William? . . .

VICAR—Yes, and then what followed? Having given up so much for me, what followed?

AUNTIE—My dear, circumstances were too strong for us! Can't you see? *You* were not made to live out your life in any little odd hole and corner of the world! There was your reputation, your fame: you began to be known as an author, a scholar, a wonderful preacher— All this required position, influence, social prestige. You don't think I was ambitious for myself: it was for *you.*

VICAR—For *me*—yes! And how do you imagine I have benefited by all your scheming, your contriving, your compromising, your . . .

AUNTIE—In the way I willed! I am glad of it! I worked for that—*and I won!* . . . Well, what are you troubling about now?

VICAR (*slowly*)—I am thinking of the fact that there has been no child to bless our marriage, Martha—that is, no child of our very own, no child whose love we have not stolen.

AUNTIE—My dear . . .

VICAR—We have spoken about it sometimes, haven't we? Or, rather—*not* spoken!

AUNTIE—William, why will you think of these things?

VICAR—In those first days, dearest, I brought you two children of our own to cherish, little unborn souls crying for you to mother them— You have fostered only the one. That one is called the Scholar. Shall I tell you the name of the other?

AUNTIE (*after a moment*)—Yes . . .

VICAR—I hardly know: I hardly dare to name him; but perhaps it was—the Saint.

AUNTIE—What I have done, William, has been done for love of you—you only—you only in the world!

VICAR—Yes: that's what I *mean!* [*The thought troubles her for a moment: then she paces up and down in agitated rebellion.*]

AUNTIE—No! I can't believe it! I can't think that love is as wrong as you say!

VICAR—Love is a spirit of many shapes and shadows: a spirit of fire and darkness—a minister of heaven and hell. Sometimes I think the very damned know love—in a way. It can inform men's souls with the gladness of high archangels, or possess them with the despair of devils! (*She suddenly stands still, struck by the echo in his last phrase.*) Yes? . . .

Auntie—I was wondering . . . Wondering what Manson meant just now.

Vicar—When?

Auntie—When he spoke about your brother Robert.

Vicar—I think he made it clear. He said we were—rid of him forever!

Auntie (*thoughtfully*)—Ye-es . . . William, I begin to fear that man.

Vicar—Whom—Robert?

Auntie—No, Manson. [*Re-enter* Manson *from door, right. He carries a five-pound note in his hand.*]

Manson—His lordship will be glad to see you.

Auntie—Very well, Manson. Why, what have you there?

Manson—A remedy for misapprehension, ma'am.

Auntie—It's a five-pound note.

Manson—Yes.

Auntie—Come, William. [*She goes to the drawing-room door, her head anxiously turned toward* Manson.]

Vicar (*at the door*)—What are we going to do, Martha?

Auntie—I don't know: God help me, I can't see the way! [*They both go out,* Manson *watching them. He then moves up to the fire, and burns the five-pound note. He watches the flames leap up as he speaks.*]

Manson—*Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother: thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.*[1] [*He comes down to the middle of the room.* Mary *enters eagerly. Seeing him alone, she gives a little cry of gladness.*]

Mary—Oh, how jolly! Where are they?

Manson—In the next room.

Mary—Ah! Ah! (*She comes to his outstretched arms. He folds her to his heart, facing the audience.*) *Looking up into his face.*) Isn't it a great secret? What shall I call you, now we are alone?

Manson—Ssh! They may hear you!

Mary—If I whisper . . .

Manson—They are very near! . . . (*Disengaging himself.*) I must be about my business. Is this the bell to the kitchen?

Mary—Yes. Let me help you. (Manson *having rung the bell, they begin to remove the breakfast things.* Mary *employs herself with the crumb-scoop.*) If auntie and uncle could see me now! If they only knew! I've kept the secret: I've told nobody! . . . These will do for the birds. Look, I'll take them now. (*She throws the crumbs out of the French windows.*) Poor little mites! [*She returns to the table.*]

Manson—You are fond of the birds?

Mary—Just love them! Don't you?

Manson—They are my very good friends. Now, take the cassock. Fold it up and put it on the chair. [Rogers *enters whilst he gives this command.*]

Rogers—Well, I'm . . . 'Owever, it's no business of mine!

Mary (*brightly*)—What's up with you, Rogers?

Rogers (*with reservation*)—Nuthin', miss. [*He fetches the tray.*]

Mary—Then why look so solemn?

Rogers (*lugubriously*)—Ain't lookin' solemn, miss.

Manson—Hold up the tray, Rogers.

Rogers—*Am* 'oldin' it up, Mr. Manson.

Mary (*loading him up*)—I'm sure there *is* something the matter!

Rogers—Well, since you arsk me, miss, it's the goin's on in this 'ouse! I never see such a complicyted mass of mysteries and improbabilities in my life! I shall 'av' to give in my notice!

Mary—Oh, Rogers, that would be dreadful! Why?

Manson—Now the cloth, Mary . . .

Rogers—Cos why? *That's* why!—What you're doin' now! I likes people to keep their proper stytion! I was brought up middle-clarss myself, an' taught to be'ave myself before my betters!—No offence to *you*, Mr. Manson! [*He says this with a jib, belying his words.*]

Mary—Nonsense, Rogers! I like helping.

Rogers—My poor farver taught me. 'E led a godly, righteous, an' sober life. 'E was a grocer.

Manson—Come, Rogers. Take them to the kitchen. [Rogers *obeys with some asperity of mien. At the door he delivers a Parthian shot.*]

Rogers—If my poor farver could see what I've seen to-day, 'e would roll over in 'is grave! [Manson *opens the door for him. He goes.*]

Mary (*gayly*)—Isn't he funny? Just because his silly old father . . .

Manson—Ssh! His father's *dead*, Mary! (*There is a sudden pause. He comes down to her.*) Well, have you thought any more about . . .

Mary—About wishing?—Yes, lots.

Manson—And have you? . . .

Mary—I don't know what to think. You see, I never believed properly in wishing before. Wishing is a dreadfully difficult thing, when you *really* set about it, isn't it?

Manson—Yes.

Mary—You see, ordinary things won't do: they're all wrong, somehow. You'd feel a bit of a sneak to wish for *them*, wouldn't you?

Manson—Yes.

Mary—Even if you got them, you wouldn't care, after all. They'd all turn to dust and ashes in your hand. That last bit is what Grannie Durden said.

Manson—Who's she?

Mary—She's the poor old woman I've been having breakfast with. Do you know, *she* said a funny thing about wishing. I must tell you first that she's quite blind and very deaf— Well, she's been wishing ever so long to see and hear; and at last she says she can!

Manson—What—see and hear? [*He glances toward the drawing-room.*]

Mary—Um! I must say, I didn't notice any difference myself; but that's what she said. She agreed with you, that wishing was the only way; and if you didn't know how, then you had to keep on wishing to wish, until you could.

Manson—And so . . .

Mary—Well, that's as far as I've got. [Rogers *re-enters.*]

Manson—Yes, what is it, Rogers?

Rogers—Cook's compliments, Mr. Manson, and might she make so bold as to request your presence in the kitchen, seein' as she's 'ad no orders for lunch yet. O' course, she says, it will do when you've *quite* finished any private business you may 'av' in the upper part of the 'ouse! [*He delivers this with distinct hauteur.* Manson, *smiling, goes up to him and takes his head in his hands.*]

Manson—Why do you dislike me so, Rogers?

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[1] Psalms L. 19-21.

Rogers (*taken aback*)—Me? Me dislike you, Mr. Manson? *Oh no!*

Manson—Come along, little comrade. [*They go out like brothers,* Manson's *arm round the lad's shoulders.* Mary *is left seated on the table, chuckling at the situation. Suddenly her face becomes serious again: she is lost in thought. After a while she speaks softly to herself.*]

Mary—What have I needed most? What have I not had? . . . Oh! I know! . . . (*Her face flames with the sudden inspiration.*) And I never dreamed of it till now! [Robert *enters by the main door. The child turns round, and, seeing him, gives a startled little cry. They stand facing each other, silent. Presently* Robert *falters.*]

Robert—Beg pawdon, miss: I . . .

Mary—Who are you? What are you doing here?

Robert—I'm . . . I was goin' ter see what's—what's in that room . . .

Mary—If you do, I'll . . . [*She moves swiftly to the bell.*]

Robert—It's a mistake, miss. P'r'aps I'd—I'd better tek my 'ook.

Mary—Stop! . . . How dare you! Don't you know you're a very wicked man?

Robert—Me, miss?

Mary—Yes, you.

Robert—Yus, I know it.

Mary (*trying to save the sinner*)—That's isn't the way to be happy, you know. Thieves are never *really* happy in their hearts.

Robert—Wot's that? . . . Do you tike me for a thief, miss? You? . . . [*He advances to the table: she edges away.*] Why don't you arnser?

Mary—I had rather not say.

Robert—Cos why?

Mary—I don't want to be unkind. [Robert *sinks stricken into the chair behind him.*]

Robert—Oh, my Gawd, my Gawd!

Mary (*relenting*)—Of course, if—if you're sorry, that makes a difference. Being sorry makes a lot of difference. Doesn't it?

Robert—Yus, a fat lot!

Mary—Only you must never give way to such a wicked temptation again. Oh, don't cry! [*She goes to him.*]

Robert—Oo is cryin'? I'm not cryin'—not a cryin' sort! On'y—you 'adn't no right to talk to me like that, miss.

Mary—Why, didn't you own . .

Robert—No, I didn't. It was you as jumped down my throat, an' took up my words afore I got 'em out.

Mary—Oh, I'm sorry. Did I make a mistake?

Robert—Yus, miss—a whopper.

Mary—Then you're not a . . .

Robert—*No*, swelp me Gaw— (*He pulls himself up.*) I assure you, no. I'm a bit of a low un; but I never come so stinkin' low as that. You thought I looked like one, all the same. Didn't yer, now?

Mary—Well, you see, I thought you said so; and then there's your . . .

Robert—I know! You don't like my mug. It ain't much of a mug to look at, is it? Sort of a physog for a thief, eh? See them lines?—Want to know what them stand for? That's drink, an' starvytion, an' 'ard work, an' a damned lonely life.

Mary—Oh, you poor man!

Robert—Yus, miss, I am.

Mary—You mustn't say "damned," you know.

Robert—No, miss.

Mary—*That's* wicked, at any rate.

Robert—Yus, miss.

Mary—And you owned yourself that you drank. That's not very good, either.

Robert—No, miss.

Mary—So, you see, you *are* a little bit naughty, after all, aren't you?

Robert—Yus, miss.

Mary—Now, isn't it much nicer for you to try and look at things in this way? I'm sure you feel a great deal better already. Do you know— Wait a moment . . . (*She resumes her seat, turning it toward him, the passion of salvation in her eyes.*) Do you know, I'd like to do you some good!

Robert—You, miss?

Mary—Yes, wouldn't you like me to?

Robert—You're the on'y person in the world I'd—I'd like to see try, miss.

Mary (*glad in the consciousness of "being used"*)—That's because you know I'm interested in you, that I mean it, that I'm not trying to think only of myself.

Robert (*a little stupidly*)—Aren't you, miss?

Mary—No: we must always remember that there are other people in the world besides ourselves. [*This coincides with his experience: he says so.*]

Robert—Yus, miss, there are.

Mary—Very well: now I'll see what I can do to help you.

Robert—Thank you, miss.

Mary—Now, don't you think, if you were really *to wish* very hard, it would make things better for you?

Robert—I don't know what you mean, miss.

Mary—Well, it's like this: if you only wish very, very hard, everything comes true.

Robert—Wot *I* want, ain't no use wishing for!

Mary—It doesn't matter what it is! Anything you like! It will all happen!

Robert—Blimey, wot's the good o' talkin'?

Mary—Oh, wouldn't you like to help to spin the fairy-tale?

Robert (*roughly*)—I don't believe in no fairy-tales!

Mary—*I do!* I don't believe there's anything else in the world, if we only knew! And that's why I'm wishing! I'm wishing now! I'm wishing hard!

Robert (*passionately*)—So am I, Gawd 'elp me! But it's no use!

Mary—It is! It is! What are you wishing for?

Robert—Never you mind! Summat as impossible as—fairy-tales!

Mary—So's mine! That's what it has to be! Mine's the most impossible thing in the world!

Robert—Not more than mine!

Mary—What's yours?

Robert—What's yours?

Mary—*I want my father!*

Robert—I WANT MY LITTLE KID! [*There is a second's pause.*]

Mary—Your—what? . . .

Robert (*brokenly*)—My—daughter.

Mary—Oh! . . . [*She goes toward him: they face each other. Softly.*] Is she dead? [*He stands looking at her.*] Is she? [*He turns away from her.*]

Robert—Fur as I am concerned—yus.

Mary—What do you mean? *Isn't* she dead?

Robert—She's alive, right enough.

Mary—Perhaps—perhaps she ran away? . . .

Robert—She got took.

Mary—How do you mean—gypsies?

Robert—I *give* 'er up. 'Ad to.

Mary—Why?

Robert—Look at me! . . . *That*—an' the drink, an' the low wages, an' my ole woman dyin'! That's why I give 'er up.

Mary—Where is she now?

Robert—Never you mind. She's bein' looked arfter.

Mary—By whom?

Robert—By people as I've allus 'ated like poison!

Mary—Why, aren't they kind to her?

Robert—Yus: they've made 'er summat, as I couldn't 'a' done.

Mary—Then why do you hate them?

Robert—I don't any longer. I 'ates myself, I 'ates the world I live in, I 'ates the bloomin' muck 'ole I've landed into!

Mary—Your wife's dead, you say?

Robert—Yus.

Mary—What would she think about it all?

Robert (*hollowly, without variation*)—I don't know: I don't know: I don't know. [Mary *sits down beside him.*]

Mary (*thoughtfully*)—Isn't it strange—both our wishes alike! You want your little girl; and I, my father!

Robert—What sort of a . . .

Mary—Yes?

Robert—What sort of a bloke might your father be, miss?

Mary—I don't know. I have never seen him.

Robert—Got no idea? Never—'eard *tell* of 'im?

Mary—Never.

Robert—'Aven't thought of 'im yourself, I s'pose? Wasn't particular worth while, eh?

Mary—It's not that. I've been selfish. I never thought anything about him until to-day.

Robert—What made you think of 'im—to-day?

Mary—I can't quite say. At least . . .

Robert—Mebbe 'e wrote—sent a telingram or summat, eh?—t' say as 'e was comin'?

Mary (*quickly*)—Oh no: he never writes: we never hear from him. That's perhaps a bit selfish of him, too, isn't it?

Robert (*after a moment*)—Looks like it, don't it?

Mary—But I don't think he can be really selfish, after all.

Robert (*with a ray of brightness*)—Cos why?

Mary—Because he must be rather like my Uncle William and Uncle Joshua. [*He looks at her curiously.*]

Robert—Like your . . .

Mary—Yes—they're his brothers, you know. This is Uncle William's house.

Robert—Yes, but what do you know about . . .

Mary—About Uncle Joshua? Well, I happen to know a good deal more than I can say. It's a secret.

Robert—S'pose your *Uncle William* spoke to you about *'im?*

Mary—Well, yes, Uncle William spoke about him, too.

Robert—But never about your father?

Mary—Oh no, never.

Robert—Why, miss?

Mary (*slowly*)—I—don't—know.

Robert—P'r'aps 'e ain't—good enough—to be—to be the brother of your Uncle William—and—Uncle—Joshua—eh, miss?

Mary—Oh, I can't think that!

Robert—Why not, miss? Three good brothers in a family don't scarcely seem possible—not as families go—do they, miss?

Mary—You mustn't talk like that! A father must be much—much better than anybody else!

Robert—But s'pose, miss—s'pose 'e ain't . . .

Mary—He is! I know it! Why, that's what I'm wishing! . . .

Robert—P'r'aps it ain't altogether 'is fault, miss! . . .

Mary—Oh, don't! Don't . . .

Robert—Things may 'a' bin agin 'im, miss! . . .

Mary—Oh, you make me so unhappy! . . .

Robert—P'r'aps 'e's 'ad a 'ard life—a bitter 'ard life—same as I 'av', miss . . . [*He breaks down.*]

Mary—Ssh! Please! Please! . . . I can quite understand: indeed, indeed, I can! I'm sorry—oh, so sorry for you. You are thinking of yourself and of your own little girl—the little girl who doesn't know what you have been telling me. Don't be miserable! I'm sure it will all turn out right in the end—things always do; far better than you dream! Only . . . don't take away *my* little dream! [*She turns away her face.* Robert *rises heavily.*]

Robert—All right, miss—I won't: swelp me Gawd, I won't. Don't cry, miss. Don't, miss! Breaks my 'eart—after all you've done for me. I ort never to 'a' bin born—mekin' you cry! Thank you kindly, miss: thank you very kindly. I'll—I'll tek my 'ook.

Mary—Oh, but I'm so sorry for *you!*

Robert—Thank you, miss.

Mary—I did so want to help you.

Robert—You 'av', miss.

Mary—Before you go, won't you tell me your name? Who are you?

Robert—I . . . I got no name worth speakin' of, miss: I'm—just the bloke wot's a-lookin' arter the drains. Good-bye, miss. (*At the door, he turns.*) Sorry I used bad words, miss. [*She runs to him and offers her hand. He takes it.*]

Mary—Good-bye.

Robert—Good-bye, miss. [*He goes out. She shuts the door after him, and turns a wretched little face toward the audience as the curtain falls.*]

THE FOURTH ACT

(*As the curtain rises, the scene and situation remain unchanged. After a moment,* Mary *comes down to the settee, left, and buries her face in the cushions, weeping. Shortly, the handle of the drawing-room door is turned, and from within there emerges a murmur of voices, the* Vicar's *uppermost.*)

Vicar (*within*)—Very well, then, after you have finished your letters! . . . [*The voices continue confusedly.* Mary *rises quickly and goes into the garden. The* Vicar *enters and goes to the mantelpiece wearedly: a moment later,* Auntie.]

Bishop (*within*)—I shall only be about twenty minutes.

Auntie (*entering*)—All right, don't hurry, James: you have all the morning. [*She closes the door upon the* Bishop's *grunts, and comes to the middle of the room.*]

Vicar—Hm! When he has finished his letters!

Auntie—Yes, things seem to be shaping better than we thought, William. Perhaps we have a little misjudged him. (*He looks at her curiously.*) To think, my dear, that the rebuilding of the church is becoming possible at last! All your hopes, all your enthusiasms, about to be realized! Now, it only remains to gain your brother Joshua's approval and help, and the scheme is complete!

Vicar—Supposing he—doesn't approve of the scheme?

Auntie—My dear, he must approve: he will see the advantages at once. I think James made that perfectly clear! . . . And then, look at the opportunities it creates for *you!* Not only the church, William, the beautiful big church of your dreams, with the great spires and flashing crosses and glorious windows; but a much larger sphere of usefulness than you ever dared to dream! Think of your work, William, of your great gifts—even

James had to acknowledge them, didn't he?—Think of the influence for good you will be able to wield! Ah! And then I shall see my beloved, *himself* again—No more worry, no more feverish nights and days, none of the wretched frets and fancies that have been troubling him all this morning; but the great Scholar and Saint again, the master of men's souls, the priest in the congregation!

VICAR—Suppose you try and forget me for a moment. Do you think you can?

AUNTIE—William, that's unkind! Of course I can't.

VICAR—It might mean the salvation of my soul.

AUNTIE—Oh, William! Now you're going to begin to worry again!

VICAR—Oh no: I'm quite calm. Your brother's powers of reasoning have left me philosophical. . . . Tell me, are you quite sure that you have grasped the full meaning of his project?

AUNTIE—Of course! You think no one can understand a simple business dealing but men! Women are every bit as clever!

VICAR—Well, then, this project: what was it?

AUNTIE—James explained clearly enough: the affiliation of your brother's scheme with that of the society he mentioned.

VICAR—Yes—*what* society?

AUNTIE—*The Society for the Extension of Greater Usefulness among the Clergy*. . . . It was an admirable suggestion—one that ought to appeal particularly to you. Haven't you always said, yourself, that if only you had enough money to . . .

VICAR—Did you happen to realize his explanation as to the constitution of the society?

AUNTIE—To tell the truth, I wasn't listening just then: I was thinking of you.

VICAR—The *financial* possibilities of the scheme—Did his eloquence on that point escape you?

AUNTIE—Figures always bore me, and James uses dreadfully long words.

VICAR—Did you hear nothing of *profits?*

AUNTIE—I only heard him say that you were to . . .

VICAR—Well, didn't it strike you that throughout the entire discussion he spoke rather like a *tradesman?*

AUNTIE—My dear, you can't expect everybody to be an idealist! Remember, he's a practical man: he's a bishop.

VICAR—Didn't it strike you that there are some things in this world which are not to be bought at *any* price?

AUNTIE—My dear William, bricks and mortar require money: you can't run a society without funds!

VICAR—Yes, but what of flesh and blood? What of reputation? What of a man's name?

AUNTIE—Whatever do you mean now?

VICAR—Didn't his proposal practically amount to this: that we should turn my brother Joshua's name and reputation into a bogus Building Society, of which the funds were to be scraped together from all the naked bodies and the starving bellies of the world, whilst *we* and our thieving co-directors should collar all the swag?

AUNTIE—Now, that's exactly where I think you are so unjust! Didn't you yourself refuse, before he spoke a word, to let him put a penny of his own into the concern? I must say, you were unnecessarily rude to him about that, William!

VICAR—Yes, and didn't he jump at the suggestion!

AUNTIE—He offers to give his patronage, his influence, his time. All he asks of your brother is his bare name.

VICAR—Yes, and all he asks of me is simply my eloquence, my gift of words, my power of lying plausibly!

AUNTIE—William, he is offering you the opportunity of your life!

VICAR—Damnation take my life!

AUNTIE—William, why are you so violent?

VICAR—Because violence is the only way of coming to the truth between you and me!

AUNTIE (*now thoroughly afraid*)—What do you mean by the truth, William?

VICAR—I mean this: What is the building of this church to you? Are you so mightily interested in architecture, in clerical *usefulness*, in the furtherance of God's work?

AUNTIE—I am interested in *your* work, William. Do you take me for an atheist?

VICAR—No: far worse—for an idolater!

AUNTIE—William . . .

VICAR—What else but idolatry is this precious husband-worship you have set up in your heart—you and all the women of your kind? You barter away your own souls in the service of it: you build up your idols in the fashion of your own respectable desires: you struggle silently amongst yourselves, one against another, to push your own god foremost in the miserable little pantheon of prigs and hypocrites you have created!

AUNTIE (*roused*)—It is for your own good we do it!

VICAR—Our own good! What have you made of me? You have plucked me down from whatever native godhead I had by gift of heaven, and hewed and hacked me into the semblance of your own idolatrous imagination! By God, it shall go on no longer! If you have made me less than a man, at least I will prove myself to be a priest!

AUNTIE—Do you call it a priest's work to . . .

VICAR—It is *my* work to deliver you and me from the bondage of lies! Can't you see, woman, that God and Mammon are about us, fighting for our souls?

AUNTIE (*determinedly*)—Listen to me, William, listen to me . . .

VICAR—I have listened to you too long!

AUNTIE—You would always take my counsel before . . .

VICAR—All that is done with! I am resolved to be a free man from this hour—free of lies, free of love if needs be, free even of you, free of everything that clogs and hinders me in the work I have to do! I will do my own deed, not yours!

AUNTIE (*with deadly quietness*)—If I were not certain of one thing, I could never forgive you for those cruel words: William, this is some madness of sin that has seized you: it is the temptation of the devil!

VICAR—It is the call of God!

AUNTIE (*still calmly*)—That's blasphemy, William! But I will save you—yes, I will—in spite of yourself. I am stronger than you. [*They look at each other steadily for a moment, neither yielding.*]

VICAR—Then I accept the challenge! It is God and I against you, Martha!

AUNTIE—God and I against *you*, William.

VICAR—So now—for my work!

AUNTIE (*quietly*)—Yes: what are you going to do?

VICAR—Three things.

AUNTIE—Yes—and they? . . .

VICAR—Tell Mary everything: send for my brother, Robert: and then—answer that monster in there.

AUNTIE (*fearfully*)—William, you would never dare! . . .

VICAR—Look! . . . [MARY *re-enters from the garden.*]

Mary—Auntie! Uncle! I want to speak to you at once—both of you!

Vicar—You are just in time: I wanted to speak to *you* at once.

Mary—Is it important, uncle? Mine's dreadfully important.

Vicar—So is mine.

Auntie (*quickly*)—Let the child speak, William. Perhaps . . .

Mary—I hardly know how to begin. Perhaps it's only my cowardice. Perhaps it isn't really dreadful, after all . . .

Auntie (*troubled*)—Why, what are you thinking of, Mary?

Mary—It's about something we have never spoken of before; something I've never been told.

Vicar (*searchingly*)—Yes? . . .

Auntie (*falteringly*)—Yes? . . .

Mary—I want to know about my father. [*There is a short silence. The* Vicar *looks at* Auntie.]

Vicar—Now: is God with you or me, Martha?

Mary—What do you mean by that? Is it very terrible, uncle? [*He stands silent, troubled.* Mary *crosses him, going to* Auntie.] Auntie . . .

Auntie—Don't ask me, child; I have nothing to tell you about your father.

Mary—Why, isn't he . . .

Auntie—I have nothing to tell you.

Vicar—I have.

Auntie—William! . . .

Vicar—I have, I say! Come, sit here, Mary. [*She sits to left of him, on the settee.* Auntie *is down stage on the other side of him.*] Now! What do you want to know about your father?

Mary (*passionately*)—Everything there is to know!

Auntie—William, this is brutal! . . .

Vicar—It is *my work*, Martha!—God's work! Haven't I babbled in the pulpit long enough about fatherhood and brotherhood, that I should shirk His irony when He takes me at my word! Now: what put this thought into your head to-day?

Mary—I don't know. I've been puzzling about something all the morning; but there was nothing clear. It only came clear a few minutes ago—just before I went into the garden. But I think it must have begun quite early—before breakfast, when I was talking to my—to Manson.

Auntie—Manson! . . .

Mary—And then, all of a sudden, as I was sitting there by the fireplace, *it came*—all in a flash, you understand! I found myself wishing for my father: wondering why I had never seen him: despising myself that I had never thought of him before.

Vicar—Well, what then?

Mary—I tried to picture him to myself. I imagined all that he must be. I thought of you, Uncle William, and Uncle Joshua, and of all the good and noble men I had ever seen or heard of in my life; but still—that wasn't quite like a father, was it? I thought a father must be much, much better than anything else in the world! He must be brave, he must be beautiful, he must be good! I kept on saying it over and over to myself like a little song: he must be brave, he must be beautiful, he must be good! [*Anxiously.*] That's true of fathers, isn't it, uncle? Isn't it?

Vicar—A father ought to be all these things.

Mary—And then . . . then . . .

Vicar—Yes? . . .

Mary—I met a man, a poor miserable man—it still seems like a dream, the way I met him—and he said something dreadful to me, something that hurt me terribly. He seemed to think that my father—that perhaps my father—might be nothing of the sort!

Auntie—Why, who was he—the man?

Mary—He wouldn't tell me his name: I mistook him for a thief at first; but afterwards I felt very, very sorry for him. You see, his case was rather like my own. *He was wishing for his little girl.* [*There is a short silence.*]

Vicar—Where did you meet with him?

Mary—Here, in this room.

Auntie—When was this?

Mary—A few minutes ago—just before you came in.

Auntie—Where is he now?

Mary—He said good-bye. He has gone away.

Auntie—For good?

Mary—Yes, I think so: I understood him to mean that.

Vicar—Was he—a rough-looking man?

Mary—Dreadfully; and he swore once—but afterwards he said he was sorry for that.

Vicar—Did he frighten you at all?

Mary—No, not exactly frighten: you see, I felt sorry for him.

Vicar (*slowly*)—*And he wouldn't tell you his name?* . . .

Mary—No: I asked him, but he wouldn't. [*The* Vicar *ponders this for a moment.*]

Auntie—Now, is it God with you or with me, William? [*For a moment this unnerves him. Then setting his teeth together, he faces his task stubbornly.*]

Vicar—Have you any idea about this man?

Mary—How do you mean—any idea?

Vicar—As to why he put this doubt into your head about your father.

Mary—He seemed to be thinking about himself, and how unworthy he was of his own little girl.

Vicar—Did *he* say—unworthy?

Mary—That's what I think he meant. What he said was that perhaps my father wasn't good enough to be your brother, uncle. That's not true, is it?

Vicar—No, by Heaven! *That's not true!*

Mary (*rapturously*)—Oh, I knew it, I knew it!

Vicar (*in an agony*)—Stop! You don't understand!

Mary—I understand quite enough! That's all I wanted to know!

Vicar—Listen, child! Listen! I mean that it is I who am not worthy to be called his brother.

Auntie—William, this is absurd!

Mary (*snuggling up to him*)—Isn't he a dear?

Vicar (*freeing himself*)—Listen to me, Mary: I have something awful to tell you: try and bear it bravely. You will hate me for it—never love me again! . . . No, listen! . . . Supposing your father were—not what you imagine him to be? . . .

Mary—Uncle, didn't you just say . . .

Vicar—Supposing that wretched man you spoke with just now were right, after all! What would you say?

Mary—Uncle! . . .

Vicar—Supposing he were one upon whom all the curses of the world had been most cruelly visited—his poor body scarred and graven out of human semblance; his soul the prey of hate and bitterness; his immortal spirit tortured and twisted away from every memory of God! What would you say?

Mary—Uncle, it would be terrible—terrible!

Vicar—What will you say, then, to the man who has brought him to such ruin? What will you say to that man being God's priest? What word of loathing have you for the thief who has stolen the love of another man's child, for the murderer who has slain his brother's soul?

Mary—Uncle, do you mean . . . do you mean . . .

Vicar—I mean that I am the man!

Mary—You! . . .

Auntie (*passionately*)—It is not true! It is a lie! It's entirely your father's own fault!

Mary—I don't understand. Why should Uncle William lie to me?

Auntie—He is overwrought: he is ill. It is like your uncle William to take upon himself another man's wickedness!

Mary—Then, *that* is true, at least: my father is a *wicked* man! . . .

Auntie—I don't want to speak about your father!

Mary—He is nothing that I have wished him to be: not *brave* . . .

Vicar—Yes—*that* at least!

Mary (*turning toward him*)—*Beautiful?* . . .

Vicar—What do you mean by beautiful?

Mary—You know what I mean: What you once said God was, when you called *Him* beautiful.

Vicar—I have no right to judge your father. [*She perceives the evasion.*]

Mary—Not even—*good?* . . .

Vicar—He is what I have made him. I and no other! [*She stands looking at him piteously.*]

Auntie—There is another—I! I kept them apart: I poisoned your uncle against him: I took you away from him: it was I who kept you in ignorance of your father!

Mary—Why? . . .

Auntie—Because he stands in the way of my husband's happiness! Because, even, he is your father! Because I hate him! I could almost *wish him dead!*

Vicar—Martha! . . . [*There is a long pause.*]

Mary—Then I have nobody now. It's no use wishing any more.

Auntie—Mary . . .

Mary—No! . . . I want to be alone. [*She goes out into the garden. They follow her out with their eyes.*]

Vicar—So! God has revealed His partisanship!—He has beggared us both! [**Auntie** *considers this for a moment. Then, with sudden determination she rises*]

Auntie—I am not going to be beggared without a struggle for it, William! [*She moves briskly across to the bell.*]

Vicar—What are you going to do, Martha?

Auntie (*flashing round passionately, before she can ring the bell*)—Do you think I am going to stand by and see your life wrecked—yours and that child's?

Vicar—We are not the only persons concerned, Martha.

Auntie—As far as I care, you are!

Vicar—And what of Robert? . . .

Auntie—Robert! That's what I'm going to see to now! (*She rings the bell.*) There's only one way of dealing with a brute like that!

Vicar—What's that?

Auntie—Pack him off to Australia, Africa—anywhere, so long as we are never pestered with him again!

Vicar—Do you think you'll get him to go?

Auntie—Oh, I'll find the money! A drunkard like that will do anything for money! Well, he shall have plenty: perhaps he'll drink himself to . . .

Vicar—By Heaven, but I say no!

Auntie—By Heaven, but I say yes! It's about time I took things in hand again! Do you think I'm going to risk that child learning everything? She knows more than enough already! Providentially, she does not know the worst!

Vicar—And what knowledge do you consider Providence has so kindly spared her?

Auntie—The knowledge *who that man was!* She shall never know, if I can have my way! [*She rings the bell again, impatiently.*] Why doesn't he come? Why doesn't he come?

Vicar—Who?

Auntie—Manson. [*Enter* **Manson** *by the main door. There is a subtle change in the manner of him, a look in his eye, as of the servant merging in the master.*]

Manson—You rang.

Auntie—Yes, come in, Manson. I want to have a little confidential talk with you—confidential, you understand.

Manson (*eyeing her*)—If you please. I expected this. [*He has the air of a judge. She hurries on, unheeding.*]

Auntie—Manson, you saw everything. You were here when that dreadful creature arrived.

Manson—Which?

Auntie—Why, my husband's brother, Robert. Didn't you tell me, William, that Manson heard everything he said?

Vicar—Yes.

Auntie—Then you will know the wretched plight we are in. Manson, it's terrible. I want your help. By-the-way, you have not spoken about it to the other servants?

Manson—I am always most discreet.

Auntie (*touched*)—Thank you, Manson, thank you: I felt that I could trust you. It's to prove my trust that I've sent for you now. Perhaps I'd better begin by explaining everything quite clearly, so that you . . .

Manson—There is no need. I know everything already.

Auntie—Everything! How? . . .

Manson—A certain gift of divination—mine by birth. And, besides, you forget that I had a long conversation with your brother-in-law after master left the room.

Auntie—What! Whilst my brother was here?

Manson—Yes: we all three had breakfast together.

Auntie—Breakfast together! Then James has heard all!

Manson—Not quite all. You may have observed that your brother is a little deaf.

Auntie—But surely— What did he think?

Manson—He mistook him for your husband.

Auntie—My husband!

Manson—Your brother is also a little blind, remember.

Auntie (*delighted*)—Then James never found out? . . .

Manson—Oh yes: I took care to undeceive him on the point.

Auntie—Good gracious! How did he take it?

Manson—At first, a little angrily; but, after a while, some few poor words of my own chanced to move him to more—*profitable* meditation.

Auntie—Manson, you're perfectly wonderful! I respect you very, very much!

Manson—It is not enough. I shall require more.

Auntie (*embarrassed*)—Oh, of course, I shall be glad to do anything that . . . Why, what do you mean? . . .

Manson—I mean that service such as mine demands a greater recompense!

Auntie—You may be sure that anything in reason . . .

Manson—It must go beyond that!

Auntie—Well, what do you ask?

Manson—The uttermost obedience, loyalty, and love!

Auntie—Manson, how dare you! By what right . . .

Manson—By my own right!

Auntie—This is insolence! What right do you mean?

Manson—The right of understanding, the right of purpose, and the right of will!

Auntie—You force me to speak angrily to you! Do you forget that you are my servant?

Manson—No! And, therefore, it is my office to command you now! Sit down, and hear me speak!

Vicar—He has been sent to help us! Martha, this is God!

Manson—Over here, please. [*He points to the settee.*]

Auntie—I . . . I . . . [Manson *still points. She wavers as in a dream, and at length moves mechanically across the room, obeying him.*]

Manson—Now, let me tell you exactly why you have sent for me here. There is a strange and wretched turmoil in your soul: you have done wrong, and you know it—but you don't know all! You would keep what miserable little right you have by bolstering it up with further wrong. And you have sent for me to help you in that wrong!

Auntie—How dare you say that?

Manson—Haven't you sent for me to help you in your plans about his brother, Robert?

Auntie (*faintly*)—What plans? . . .

Manson—The plan of banishing him further from your lives than ever! The plan of *providing* for him! The plan of patching up his bitter wrongs with gold!

Auntie—How did you know that?

Manson—I know *you!* What, do you think that God's eyes are like your brother's—blind? Or do you think these things can be done in darkness without crying aloud to Heaven for light?

Auntie—I am here to work my will, not yours!

Manson—What gain do you hope to bring yourself by that?

Auntie—I am not thinking of myself! I am thinking only of my husband's happiness!

Manson—Behold the happiness you have already brought him!

Auntie—There is the child! It would break her heart!

Manson—What is her heart but broken now—by you?

Auntie—Robert himself would be the first to repudiate any other plan.

Manson—Have you tried him?

Auntie—Of course not; but he must see the impossibility.

Manson—What impossibility?

Auntie—The impossibility of having him here: the impossibility of letting him see the child: the impossibility of him and his brother ever meeting again!

Manson—Is that your only difficulty?

Auntie—Only difficulty! What, would you have me welcome him with open arms?

Manson—Yes, and heart, too!

Auntie—Have him here, entertain him, treat him as a guest?

Manson—As an honoured guest!

Auntie—In this house?

Manson—This house.

Auntie—Good Heavens! what else?

Manson—Sweep and garnish it throughout, seek out and cleanse its hidden corners, make it fair and ready to lodge him royally as a brother!

Auntie (*desperately*)—I won't do it! I can't! I can't!

Manson—With my assistance, you can!

Vicar—Manson, how can we bring it about?

Auntie—I daren't! I daren't!

Vicar—I dare! I will!

Auntie—In God's name, how is it possible?

Manson—*Make me the lord and master of this house for one little hour!*

Vicar—By Heaven, yes!

Manson—And you? You? . . .

Auntie—[*She falters a few moments: then, utterly broken down, she whispers, feebly.*] Yes.

Manson—Then first TO CLEANSE IT OF ITS ABOMINATIONS! [*The* Bishop *enters from the drawing-room. He carries a letter in his hand.*]

Bishop—Well, here is the letter I have written to the secretary of our Society: I have explained everything quite nicely; and have warned him, of course, against doing anything definite in the matter until we have consulted your dear brother. Now . . . Eh, what? Oh! . . . [Manson *has tapped his ear, peremptorily: he fixes his ear-trumpet.*]

Manson—I bear you a message from the master of this house. Leave it.

Bishop—Really, I . . . Most extraordinary! Hm! [*He blows down the ear-trumpet, and afterwards wipes it very carefully with his handkerchief.* Manson *stands, as though carven in marble, waiting for him to fix it again.*] Now: again, please.

Manson—You are no longer necessary. Leave this house.

Bishop—You scoundrel! You impudent scoundrel! You . . . You . . . Give me back my five-pound note!

Manson (*pointing to the fire*)—It is invested for you.

Bishop—I will have it back at once!

Manson—Hereafter, was the arrangement.

Bishop—Mr. Smythe! Where are you? Do you hear what this blackguard says?

Vicar—I endorse it, every word.

Bishop—Martha! . . . [*She turns away from him as from some horror of sin. The* Bishop *stands dumfounded for a moment or two: then he boils over.*] Now I see it all! I've been trapped, I've been tricked! Martha, this is all your doing! Brought me here on a trumped-up story of relationship with the Bishop of Benares, to insult me! Oh, what would that godly man say if he heard of it!—And he *shall* hear of it, believe me! Your infamy shall be spread abroad! So this is your revenge, sir— [*he turns to the* Vicar]—your revenge for the contumely with which I have very properly treated you, sir! *Now* I understand why I was made to sit down and eat sausages with a butler—yes, sir, with a butler and a common workingman! Oh! I could die with shame! You have bereft me of all words! You . . . You . . . You are no scholar, sir! And your Greek is contemptible! . . . [*He crosses to* Auntie.] Martha! You are no sister of mine henceforward! [*Going, he returns to her.*] Anathema maranatha! [*He bounces up to the door, but turns back again for a last word with* Manson.] And I have one word for you, sir! You are a scoundrel, sir—a cheat, an impostor! And if I could have my way with you, I would have you publicly whipped: I would visit you with the utmost rigour of the law; I would nail you up, sir, for an example!

Manson—I have encountered similar hostility before, my lord—from gentlemen very like your lordship. Allow me . . . [*He opens the door, his eyes flashing.*]

Bishop—Don't trouble, sir. I can get my hat and my stick and my portmanteau for myself! I can do very well without *your* assistance—thank God! [*He stumps out.* Manson *closes the door after him, barring it, as it were, with his great left arm. He lifts the other arm slowly, as commanding silence.*]

After a moment the front door is heard slamming noisily. AUNTIE *sinks, weeping, upon the settee. The* VICAR *goes over to comfort her. The uplifted hand of* MANSON *assumes the* BISHOP'S *sign of blessing as the curtain slowly falls.*]

THE FIFTH ACT

(*As the curtain rises, the scene and situation remain unchanged.*)

[*There is heard a Ring of the Bell. All three turn their heads, alert.*]

VICAR—If it's my brother . . .

MANSON—Which?

VICAR—I meant—the Bishop of Benares; but . . .

AUNTIE (*hand on his arm, apprehensively*)—William . . .

MANSON—It wants ten minutes of the time you said you expected him. [*Goes to door: turns.*] Only ten minutes. [*He goes out, closing the door softly.*]

VICAR—Ten minutes! . . .

AUNTIE—We shall never be able to do it, William! How can we possibly undo the work of all these years in ten minutes? It wants a miracle.

VICAR—We must make the attempt, somehow.

AUNTIE—Yes—yes: how? Oh, I have been blind—blind! [*She walks across the room in agitation.*] Where has he gone, I wonder? We don't even know that—where he is!

VICAR (*making a movement*)—Perhaps Manson . . .

AUNTIE—No, no, no: it must be ourselves . . . Ten minutes!—And no assistance on *his* side: we can't expect it, after our treatment of him. He will hate *me* most of all: there's the chief difficulty! . . .

VICAR—You would say *me*, if you had seen his face and heard his voice this morning!

AUNTIE—God help us, God pity us!

VICAR—Amen . . . Then, there's the child, too! That difficulty must be faced.

AUNTIE—Yes—no escape! We shall have to pay the whole debt, William: I see that.

VICAR—Who knows! Perhaps the child will have to pay most, when all is done.

AUNTIE—The innocent for the guilty—yes . . . Oh, William, William, can you ever forgive me?

VICAR—There is much to forgive, both sides, Martha. My sin has been greater than yours. You have only loved unworthily in blindness: I have seen clearly and been a coward. [*Enter* MARY from the garden.] Mary! . . .

MARY—Let me speak, uncle. I have been thinking, out there in the garden—thinking very hard: I've been trying to put things together again and make them straight; but it's still very difficult. Only there's one thing—I'm sorry I was unkind just now: I didn't mean it; you are everything I have—everything I have ever had; and as for what uncle said—about himself, I mean—I can't believe it. No, I'm sure there's a mistake somewhere; and mistakes can always be put right, if we only help one another and mean it. Shall we try, uncle? Shall we, auntie?

AUNTIE—If it's not too late! . . .

MARY—It can't be too late, auntie dear, if we all wish very hard. I was a coward to give up wishing. That was *my* sin, too!

AUNTIE—God knows, I wish, Mary! . . .

VICAR—And I! . . .

MARY—And, indeed, I do! . . . Now, I've been thinking: I've been trying to look the worst in the face. Supposing my father *is* the wicked man you say—the very, very wickedest man that ever lived, don't you think if we tried to love him very much it might make a difference?

VICAR—What made you think of that, Mary? . . .

MARY (*simply*)—It's what you taught me, uncle, in your sermons.

VICAR—*I* taught you? . . .

MARY—Yes: and, besides, there's another reason . . . I've been thinking of the poor man I met this morning.

AUNTIE— } Yes . . .
VICAR— } What of him? . . .

MARY—*He* said he was a wicked man, and at first he looked so dreadfully wicked, I believed him; but when I began to look at him closely, and heard him talk about his little girl, everything seemed different! I could no more believe him, than I can believe you, uncle, when you say such awful things about yourself! I believe he was a much better man than he ever dreamed! And so I think we might find my father just the same, if he was properly loved and looked after!

VICAR (*with determination*)—Then listen to me, Mary: I have something to tell you: that very man you spoke to . . . [ROGERS *enters, his face betraying signs of his morning's affliction.*]

ROGERS—Beg your pardon, sir; but . . .

VICAR—Yes, Rogers: what is it?

ROGERS—Mr. Manson sent me, sir; it ain't my fault! . . .

VICAR—Do explain yourself, Rogers!

ROGERS—Well, sir, it's a bit orkard: it's . . . I really don't know what you'll say, sir, I don't really . . .

VICAR (*impatiently*)—Come, come, come, what is it?

ROGERS—*It's a man, sir!*

VICAR—Well, there's nothing very extraordinary in that. Wants to see me, he?

ROGERS—Yes, sir; and what's more, Mr. Manson told me to *bring 'im in!*

VICAR—Well, why don't you?

ROGERS—'E's mucked up to the eyes, sir! Bin down the drains! *It's the same chap as come an' made so free 'ere this mornin'!* [*There is a general rapturous excitement.*]

VICAR—Praise God! Show him in at once!

ROGERS (*flabbergasted*)—What! In *'ere*, sir? . . .

VICAR—Come, come, come! [ROGERS'S *cosmos is fast slipping away: he crawls abjectly to the door: his hand on the knob, he turns once more a face of bewildered inquiry upon the* VICAR, *who snaps his fingers impatiently.*]

ROGERS (*with a sickly smile*)—'E's just outside, sir. [*Opening the door, he whines.*] Oh, *do* come in. [ROBERT *enters, amply fulfilling the lad's description. The latter lags out, nauseated with the world.* ROBERT *stands up stage, in the middle:* AUNTIE *and* VICAR, *down stage, one on either side.* MARY *with her aunt.*]

ROBERT—Can I be 'eard civil in this 'ouse, if I speak a few words? [*They make a movement as toward him.*] 'Old back! Don't you come near me! Don't you so much as speak till I've done! . . . [*To* AUNTIE *and* VICAR *respectively.*] You don't know me: *you* don't know me . . . Understand? There's no one 'ere as knows oo I am, excep' one little gel—'*er* over there. Now, keep quiet! 'Ere! . . . [MARY *goes up to him.*] Tell 'em oo I am.

MARY—Why, it's my friend—the man I was telling you about! The man who looks after the drains!

ROBERT—That's about it: I'm the drain-man, *see?* Thought you might be mistakin' me for—

summat else, if you wasn't told. Now you know. [Mary's *face, as she returns, bears the first dawn of an idea. The* Vicar *lifts a hand of warning to* Auntie.]

Vicar—Go on.

Robert—That's what I come 'ere to talk abaht—my job. P'r'aps you'll think as it ain't a tasty subjic, before a lot o' nice, clean respectable people as never 'ad anythin' worse on their fingers than a bit of lawn-dirt, playin' crokey; but *some one* 'as to see to the drains, *some one* 'as to clear up the muck of the world! I'm the one. An' I'm 'ere to tell you about it.

Auntie (*involuntarily*)—Oh! . . .

Robert—You don't like that, ma'am? 'Urts your feelin's, eh?

Auntie—Yes; but not in the way you mean.

Mary—But you know, you really are a little unpleasant!

Robert—I'm not 'ere to be pleasant, young leddy: I'm 'ere to edicate you.

Vicar—Yes, I think I see!

Auntie (*breathlessly*)—Go on: go on!

Robert—Well, I come to this 'ouse this mornin', I don't mind ownin' it, in a rotten bad frame of mind: I 'ad a little job on 'and—a job a bit above my 'ead, an' it got me dahn an' worried me: yus it did—worried me. That young leddy 'll tell you wot I was like when *she* fust saw me: I looked that bad, she thought I come to steal summat! Well, p'r'aps I did, arter all—summat as I 'ad no right to, summat as don't properly belong to a streaky swine like me. That was when *she* fust saw me; but I was wuss before that, I tell you strite!

Mary (*self-consciously*)—What changed you?

Robert—A bloke I met, miss, as knowed me better than I knowed myself. 'E changed me.

Auntie ⎧ Manson! . . .
Vicar ⎨ Manson! . . .
Mary ⎩ Oh, I thought, perhaps . . .

Robert—Don't know 'is name; 'e was a fair knock-aht— Got togs on 'im like an Earl's Court Exhibition . . . *'E* changed me: 'e taught me my own mind; 'e brought me back to my own job—*drains.*

Auntie—Yes . . .

Robert—Funny thing, ma'am, people's born different: some's born without noses in their 'eads, worth speakin' of. I wasn't—I can smell out a stink anywhere.

Auntie (*fascinated*)—I am sure you can. This is most interesting!

Robert (*warming*)—Moment I stuck my 'ead in this 'ouse, I knowed as summat was wrong in my line, and I ses to myself: *Wot oh, 'e ain't such an awlmighty liar, arter all—that's drains!* An' drains it was, strike me dead—arskin' your pawdon!

Mary—Now, didn't I always say . . .

Robert—Yus, miss, you're one o' the nosey uns, I can see! Well, soon as ole Togs got done with 'is talk, I got my smeller dahn, follered up the scent, an' afore I knowed where I was, I was in it, up to my eyes!—Out there in the room with the blood-red 'eap o' books! Blimey, you never did see! Muck, ma'am!—Just look at my 'ands! Ain't that pretty? 'Owever, I got there, right enough, I don't fink! Fancy I put that little bit strite afore I done!

Auntie—Oh, this is too beautiful of you! . . .

Robert (*burning with enthusiasm, and manifestly affected by her appreciation*)—Wait a bit: I got more yet! Talk abaht bee-utiful!—That bit was on'y an ash-pan! Look 'ere, ma'am, I got the loveliest little job on as ever yer soiled yer 'ands in! . . .

Mary—Oh, do tell us!

Auntie ⎰ Yes, do! . . .
Vicar ⎱ Yes, yes! . . . [*A splendid rapture infects them all.*]

Robert—I followed up that drain—*I wasn't goin'* to stick till kingdom come inside your little mouse'ole out there: No, I said, *Where's this leadin' to? What's the 'ell-an'-glory use o' flushin' out this blarsted bit of a sink, with devil-knows-wot stinkin' cess-pool at the end of it!* That's wot I said, ma'am! . . .

Auntie—Very rightly! I see! I see! . . .

Robert—So up I go through the sludge, puffin' an' blowin' like a bally ole cart-'orse—strooth, it seemed miles! Talk abaht bee-utiful, ma'am, it ud 'a' done your 'eart good, it would really! *Rats!*—'Undreds on 'em, ma'am: I'm bitten clean through in places! 'Owever, I pushed my way through, some'ow, 'oldin' my nose an fightin' for my breath, till at last I got to the end—*and then I soon saw wot was the matter!* . . . It's under the church—that's where it is! I know it's the church, cos I 'eard "The Church's One Foundation" on the orgin, rumblin' up over my 'ead! Well, I . . .

All—Yes . . . yes . . .

Auntie—Why don't you go on? . . .

Robert—You'd never guess wot I saw there, not if you was to try from now till glory 'allelooyer! . . . The biggest back-'ander, I ever did 'av', swelp me! . . . [*They hang on his words expectantly.*] It ain't no drain at all!

All (*breathlessly*)—Why, what is it, then? . . .

Robert—It's a grive!

All—A grave! . . .

Robert—Yus, one o' them whoppin' great beer-vaults as you shove big bugses' corpses inter! What d'yer think o' that now?

Mary ⎰ Oh! . . .
Auntie ⎱ Horrible! . . .

Vicar—I seem to remember some tradition . .

Robert—You'd 'a' said so if you'd seen wot I seen! Talk abaht corfins an' shrouds an' bones an' dead men gone to rot, they wasn't in it, wot I saw dahn there! Madame Twosoes is a flea-bite to it! Lord!—I never thought there could be such a lot o' muck an' dead things all in one place before! It was a fair treat, it was, I tek my oath! . . . [*Rapturously.*] Why—why, it may cost a man 'is life to deal with that little job!

Vicar—My God! The thing's impossible!

Robert—Impossible! Means a bit of work, that's all!

Vicar—Why, no one would ever dare . . .

Robert—Dare! Why, wot d'you think I come 'ere for? . . .

Vicar—*You!* . . .

Robert—Yus—makin' myself unpleasant . . .

Vicar—Do you mean . . . Do I understand . . .

Robert—I mean as I've found *my place*, or I don't know a good thing when I see it!

Auntie—What! To go into that dreadful vault, and . . .

Robert—Why not: ain't it my job?

Auntie—But you said—perhaps—*death* . . .

Robert—It's worth it, it's a lovely bit of work!

Vicar—No, ten thousand times, no! The sacrifice is too much!

Robert—You call that sacrifice?—It's fun: not 'arf!

Vicar—I had rather see the church itself . . .

Robert—What, you call yourself a clergyman!

Vicar—I call myself nothing: I *am* nothing—less than nothing in all this living world!

Robert—By God, but I call myself summat—I'm the DRAIN-MAN, that's wot I am!

VICAR (*feverishly*)—You shall not go! . . .

ROBERT—Why, wot is there to fear? Ain't it worth while, to move away that load o' muck!

VICAR—The stench—the horror—the darkness . . .

ROBERT—What's it matter, if the comrides up above 'av' light an' joy an' a breath of 'olesome air to sing by? . . .

VICAR—Hour by hour—dying—alone . . .

ROBERT—The comrides up in the spans an arches, joinin' 'ands . . .

VICAR—Fainter and fainter, below there, and at last—an endless silence! . . .

ROBERT—'Igh in the dome, the 'ammerin's of the comrides as 'av' climbed aloft!

AUNTIE—William, there is yet one other way! . . .

VICAR—Yes, yes, I see: I see! . . . [*To* ROBERT.] Then—you mean to go?

ROBERT—By 'Eaven, yus!

VICAR—Then, by God and all the powers of grace, you shall not go alone! Off with these lies and make-believes! Off with these prisoner's shackles! They cramp, they stifle me! Freedom! Freedom! This is no priest's work—it calls for a man! . . . [*He tears off his parson's coat and collar, casting them furiously aside. He rolls up his sleeves.*] Now, if you're ready, Comrade: you and I together!

AUNTIE—God's might go with you, William! Accept him, Christ! [*There is a silence. Then* ROBERT *speaks with slow consideration.*]

ROBERT—I—don't—know. It's dangerous, you understand!

VICAR—I go with you.

ROBERT—This ain't psalms an' 'ymns an' ole maids' tea-parties, mind you! It may mean typhoid!

VICAR—I understand.

ROBERT—Rats.

VICAR—Yes.

ROBERT—They don't leave you alone: they got teeth, remember—poison in 'em!

VICAR—I will go with you. [*A slight pause. Then* ROBERT, *dropping into a quite ordinary tone, says.*]

ROBERT—Then let's 'av' summat to eat, an' get along. There's nuthin' more to say.

MARY (*inspired*)—Yes, there is!

ROBERT—What do you mean, miss?

MARY—I mean that I understand: that I know who you are.

ROBERT—Me? . . .

MARY (*simply*)—Yes, you are my father.

ROBERT—'Ow the everlastin' did you know that?

MARY (*going up to him*)—Because you are my wish come true: because you are brave, because you are very beautiful, you are good!

ROBERT—My little kid! My little kid! [*They embrace each other.*]

VICAR—Robert! [*Taking his left hand.*]

AUNTIE—Brother! [*Taking his other hand.*] *They form a kind of cross.* [MANSON *and* ROGERS *re-enter with tablecloth, etc., for lunch.*]

MANSON—Come along, Rogers. Take that end. [*They lay the cloth, as it were with ceremonial gravity,* MANSON *being at the upper end of the table. They pay no heed to the others, who watch them interestedly.*]

ROBERT—I could just do with a good, square feed. My work meks me 'ungry.

MANSON—Flowers, Rogers. [ROGERS *brings vase from side-board and places it on the* VICAR'S *side of the table.* MANSON *removes it to a more communal position. Presently looking up, he sees the group to his left watching him.*] Oh, beg pardon, sir: perhaps you'd like to know—the Bishop of Benares is here.

VICAR—What, already! Let's have him in at once! [MANSON *deliberates with the flowers before he speaks.*]

MANSON—He is here. [*The* VICAR *crosses toward him.*]

VICAR—What do you mean? Where is he? [MANSON *looks at him over the flowers.*]

MANSON—Here. [*The* VICAR *steps back, gazing at him. After a moment he gasps.*]

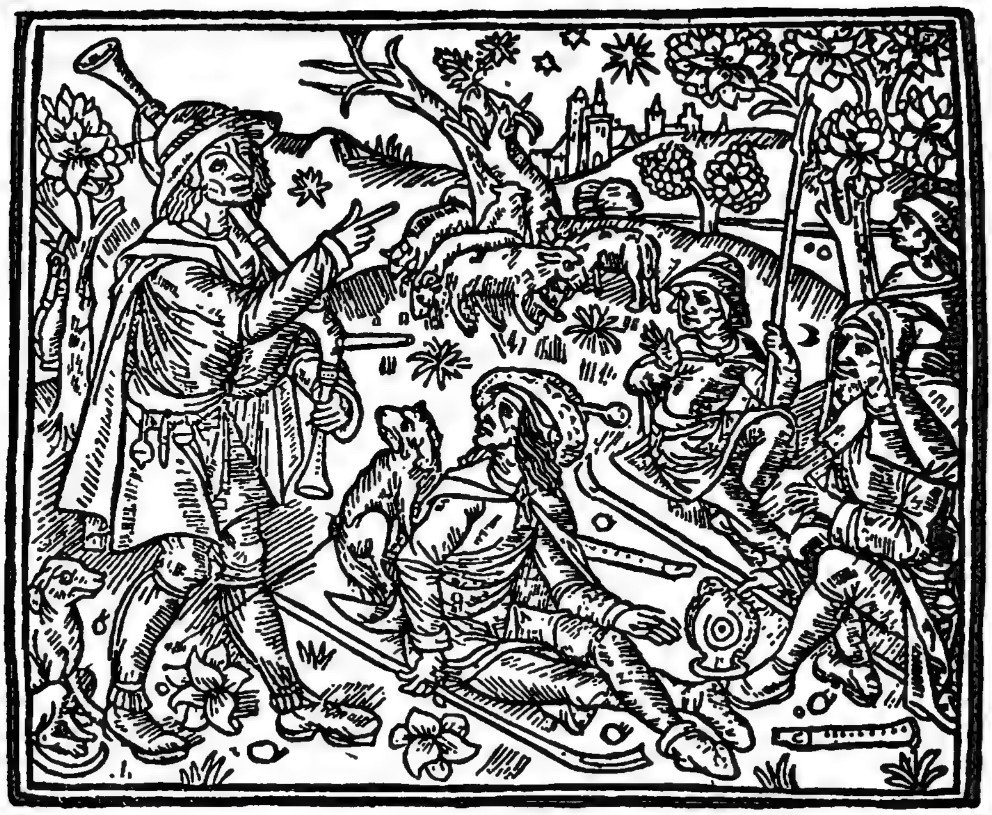
VICAR—In God's name, who are you?

MANSON—In God's Name—your brother. [*He holds out his hand. The* VICAR *takes it, sinking to his knees and sobbing as one broken yet healed. The curtain descends slowly.*]

CURTAIN

What the Sultan Was in 1719

GOD'S Deputy on Earth, Lord of the Lords of This World, Possessor of Men's Necks, King of Believers and Unbelievers, King of Kings of This World, Emperor of the East and the West, Emperor of the Chakans of Great Authority, Prince and Lord of the Most Happy Constellation, Majestic Caesar, Seal of Victory, Refuge of All the People of the Whole World; The Shadow of God, Dispensing Quiet in the Earth, King of Greece, and Asia the Lesser (viz., Anatolia), and Arabia, and Persia and Turkey, and Tartary, and Arabia Felix, and Petraea, Egypt and Syria, and Cara-Amanca, and Curdistan, Circassia and the Abazite, and Georgians; Lord of the White and the Black Sea, and the Ocean (viz., the Sea of Prince Oman), of Hungary, Wallachia, Moldavia, Africa, Algiers and Barbary; as likewise Heir of a Thousand and Thousand Regions and Provinces.



The Shepherds

From a Fifteenth Century Woodcut

Christmas

THERE *seems considerably less than one chance in three hundred and sixty-five that the birthday of Jesus of Nazareth really fell on December 25th. As late as 245 Origen condemned as superstitious the very idea of such a celebration "as if he were a King Pharaoh." And in the East, January 6th was the usual date almost up to the fifth century.*

The choice of the day accepted for fifteen hundred years is one more striking evidence of the continuity of man's thought and feeling. No matter what new revelation he may be certain he has received, his formulation of it is bound to be tinged by ogygian traditions, going back to the childhood of the race, often violently at variance with the new beliefs they are made to serve.

Thus John La Farge found that the first Christian painters expressed the just-revealed religion by all sorts of pagan symbols. And our Christmas was a sacred day in many parts of the world for thousands of years before it was associated with the founder of Christianity.

For this was an ancient anniversary (the "turn of the year" in fact)—erroneously fixed as the winter solstice, the Birthday of the Sun, when the source of life turned back once more in his vast course toward a shivering earth and made certain another spring, another harvest. A single instance: the Venerable Bede declares—

> *"The ancient peoples of the Angli began the year on the 25th of December when we now celebrate the birthday of the Lord; and the very night which is now so holy to us, they called in their tongue modranecht, that is, the mother's night, by reason we suspect of the ceremonies which in that night-long vigil they performed."*

How definitely the Church authorities were forced to recognize this universal human quality, and to strive to direct an existing worship to new objects, is shown by the letter of Pope Gregory below. Practically every Christmas observance, if followed back, leads to some other celebration, gradually absorbed into this festival.

Yule (apparently meaning the clamour of rejoicing) was the German and Celtic commemoration of the return of the sun's burning wheel; it brought us holly, mistletoe, wassail and the Yule log. The Christmas present (whose abuse in America threatens to commercialize and destroy the day's significance) is still unknown outside of Teutonic lands; the strenæ of Latin countries, and étrennes of France are New Year's gifts. St. Nicholas ("Santa Claus" from Dutch San Nicolaas) was a real Bishop of Myra (the modern Dembre, on the coast of Lycia, *east of Rhodes) in the fourth century; the engaging stories of him made him the patron saint of children, virgins, sailors—even of thieves—and of Russia; his day was on December 6th—still a mighty festival at Bari, in Italy, whither his bones were carried by pious merchants of that town, seized with crusading fervour, in 1087; and in Belgium and Holland "St. Nicholas Day is still the day of joy, not Christmas." But during the last two or three centuries he has played a star part in the Western Christmas, "trading his gray horse or ass for reindeer"—and actually seems to have travelled back in this guise to India and Australia, to every part of the British Empire.*

The Christmas tree apparently came to us from ancient Egypt via Rome and Germany. Christmas cards, on the contrary, seem to have originated almost as late as 1860—the earliest recorded one having been designed in 1846 by J. C. Horsley, R. A.

So we moderns have taken what pleased us from the customs of immemorial times, with never a thought of their primal meaning.

That is all right; we are the heirs of all the preceding ages. But we may well have a mind to the cheapening of the festival through exploitation for business only. The "Christmas trade," which spells prosperity for city department stores and countless other businesses, surely need not smother the true Christmas Spirit.

For in its essence that surely would have been acceptable to every earnest faith that has contributed its memories to our Day. H. W. L.

THE CHRISTMAS TURKEY A BURNT OFFERING

"Because they (the Anglo-Saxons) are wont to slay many oxen in sacrifices to demons, some solemnity should be put in the place of this, so that on the day of the dedication of the churches, or the nativities of the holy martyrs whose relics are placed there, they may make for themselves tabernacles of branches of trees around those churches which have been changed from heathen temples, and may celebrate the solemnity with religious feasting. Nor let them now sacrifice animals to the Devil, but to the praise of God kill animals for their own eating, and render thanks to the Giver of all for their abundance; so that while some outward joys are retained for them, they may more readily respond to inward joys. For from obdurate minds it is undoubtedly impossible to cut off everything at once, because he who strives to ascend to the highest place rises by degrees or steps and not by leaps." POPE GREGORY THE GREAT TO ABBOT MELLITUS, 601 A. D. (CLEMENT A. MILES).

IT DOESN'T SOUND JUST CHRISTMASSY

Bear-baiting appears anciently to have been one of the Christmas sports with the nobility. "Our noblemen," says Pennant in his Zoology (1776), "also kept their Bear-ward; twenty shillings was the annual reward of that officer from his lord, the Fifth Earl of Northumberland, 'when he comyth to my Lorde in Cristmas, with his Lordshippe's beests for making of his Lordschip pastyme the said twelve days.'" JOHN BRAND.

THE "BOY BISHOP" WHO RULED FROM DECEMBER 6 TO 28

On the eve of his day Saint Nicholas, that is, a boy habited like a bishop, went abroad in most parts of London, singing after the old fashion, and was received by many ignorant but well-disposed people into their houses, and had as much good cheer as ever was wont to be had before. STRYPE (1556).

[*This selection of an Episcopus Puerorum lasted in England till the establishment of Protestantism; in France till 1721; in Germany till late in the eighteenth century.*]

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN VIRGINS, PAWNBROKERS AND CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS

The legend regarding St. Nicholas's care of virgins and the connection of his name with the giving of presents in secret is told as follows:

A nobleman in the town of Patara had three daughters, but was so poor that he was unable to provide them with suitable marriage portions. He was on the point of abandoning them to a sinful course of life when St. Nicholas heard of it; and going secretly to the nobleman's house at night, he threw a purse of gold into an open window. This fell at the feet of the father, who used it for the dowry of the eldest daughter. On the second night Saint Nicholas threw a second purse for the second daughter; and on the third night another for the third daughter. On this occasion the nobleman caught Saint Nicholas in the act and held him by his robe. Saint Nicholas made him promise that he would inform no one of his munificence.

From this incident it became the custom for the older members of a household to place presents in the shoes or stockings of their young relatives. . . .

From the same exhibition of munificence, Saint Nicholas is often represented as bearing three golden balls which later became the sign of the pawnbrokers.

THE AMERICANA.

WHY WOMEN MUST NOT WEAR MEN'S CLOTHES

There is another Custom observed at this Time, which is called among us *Mumming;* which is a changing of Clothes between Men and Women; who, when dress'd in each other's Habits, go from one Neighbour's House to another, and partake of their *Christmas-Cheer,* and make merry with them in Disguise, by dancing and singing, and such like Merriments.

This is an Imitation of the Customs of the *Sigillaria,* or Festival Days, which were added to the ancient *Saturnalia,* and observed by the Heathens in *January;* which was a going in Disguise, not publickly, or to any indifferent Place; but privately, and to some well known Families.

This kind of Custom received a deserved Blow from the Church, and was taken Notice of in the Synod of *Trullus;* where it was decreed, that the Days called the *Calends* should be entirely strip'd of their Ceremonies, and the Faithful should no longer observe them: That the publick Dancings of Women should cease, as being the Occasion of much Harm and Ruin, and as being invented and observed in honour of their Gods, and therefore quite averse to the Christian Life. They therefore decreed, that no Man should be Cloathed with a Woman's Garment, no Woman with a Man's.

It were to be wish'd, this Custom, which is still so Common among us at this Season of the Year, was laid aside; as it is the Occasion of much Uncleanness and Debauchery, and directly opposite to the Word of GOD. HENRY BOURNE, 1725.

A PEACEFUL TIME FOR UNEASY GHOSTS

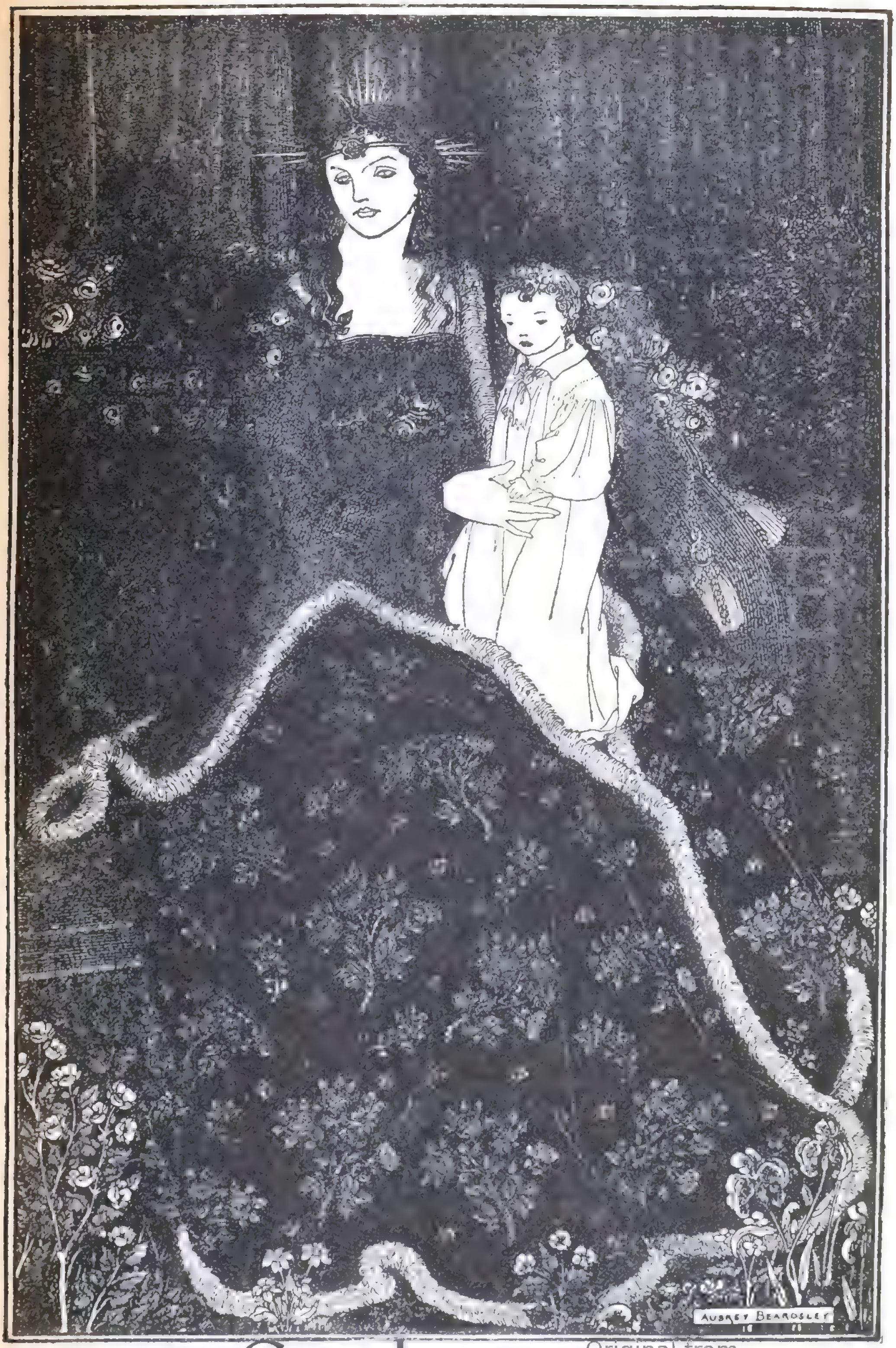
MARCELLUS: Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long:
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.
HORATIO: So have I heard, and do in part believe it.
But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill. . . .

SHAKESPEARE.

ONE OF THE MANY THINGS MR. STUBBES DIDN'T LIKE

SPUD.—Of what sorte be the other kinde of playes, which you call Lords of Mis-rule? for mee thinke the very name it self caryeth a taste of some notorious euil.

PHILOPONUS.—The name, indeed, is odious both to God and good men, & such as the very heathen people would haue blushed at once to haue named amongst them. And if


AUBREY BEARDSLEY

A CHRISTMAS CARD

Drawn by Aubrey Beardsley

the name importeth some euil, then, what may the thing it self be, judge you? But because you desire to know the manner of them, I will showe you as I haue seen them practised my self. First, all the wilde-heds of the Parish, conuenting togither, chuse them a Graund-Captain (of all mischeefe) whom they innoble with the title of 'my Lord of Mis-rule,' and him they crowne with great solemnitie, and adopt for their king. This king anointed chuseth forth twentie, fortie, threescore or a hundred lustie Guttes, like to him self, to waighte vppon his lordly Maiestie, and to guarde his noble person. Then, euerie one of these his men, he inuesteth with his liueries of green, yellow, or some other light wanton colour; And as though that were not (baudie) gaudie enough, I should say, they bedecke them selves with scarfs, ribons & laces hanged all ouer with golde rings, precious stones, & other iewels: this doon, they tye about either leg xx. or xl. bels, with rich handkercheifs in their hands, and sometimes laid a crosse ouer their shoulders & necks, borrowed for the most parte of their pretie Mopsies & loouing Besses, for bussing them in the dark. Thus al things set in order, then haue they their Hobby-horses, dragons & other Antiques, togither with their baudie Pipers and thundering Drummers to strike up the deuils daunce withall. Then, marche these heathen company towards the Church and Church-yard, their pipers pipeing, their drummers thundring, their stumps dauncing, their bels iyngling, their handkercheifs swinging about their heds like madmen, their hobbie horses and other monsters skirmishing amongst the route: & in this sorte they go to the Church (I say) & into the Church, (though the Minister be at praier or preaching), dancing & swinging their handkercheifs ouer their heds in the Church, like deuils incarnate, with such a confuse noise, that no man can hear his own voice. Then, the foolish people they looke, they stare, they laugh, they fleer, & mount vpon fourmes and pewes to see these goodly pageants solemnized in this sort. Then, after this, about the Church they goe againe and again, & so foorth into the church-yard, where they haue commonly their Sommer-haules. their bowers, arbors, & banqueting houses set vp, wherin they feast, banquet & daunce al that day & (peraduenture) all the night too. PHILLIP STUBBES: *The Anatomie of Abuses, containing a Discoverie or Briefe Summarie of such Notable Vices and Imperfections as now raigne in many Christian Countreyes of the World* (1583).

IMPERFECT PEACE AND GOOD WILL AMONG THE PILGRIMS, 1621

On ye day called Chrismas-day, ye Govr caled them out to worke, (as was used,) but ye most of this new-company excused them selves and said it wente against their consciences to work on yt day. So ye Govr tould them that if they made it mater of conscience, he would spare them till they were better informed. So he led away ye rest and lefte them; but when they came home at noone from their worke, he found them in ye streete at play, openly; some pitching ye barr, & some at stoole-ball, and such like sports. So he went to them, and tooke away their implements, and tould them that was against his conscience, that they should play & others worke. If they made ye keeping of it mater of devotion, let them kepe their houses, but ther should be no gameing or revelling in ye streets. Since which time nothing hath been atempted that way, at least openly.

WILLIAM BRADFORD. [*Edited by Charles Deane.*]

THE TROUBLES OF THE PURE AMONG THEIR FELLOW MEN

N. E. Men came hither to avoid anniversary days, the keeping of them, such as the 25th of Decr. How displeasing must it be to God, the giver of our Time, to keep anniversary days to play the fool with ourselves and others. SAMUEL SEWALL (About 1686).

THE JESTER ON HIS DEATH-BED

"Masters, I tell you all that stand about mee, if I might live to eate a Christmasse pye, I care not if I dye by and by after: for Christmasse pyes be good meat."

Scogin's Jests, 1626.

SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY'S BOUNTY

Sir Roger, after the laudable Custom of his Ancestors, always keeps open House at *Christmas*. I learned from him, that he had killed eight fat Hogs for this Season, that he had dealt about his Chines very liberally amongst his Neighbors, and that in particular he had sent a string of Hogs'-puddings with a pack of cards to every poor Family in his Parish. "I have often thought," says Sir Roger, "it happens very well that *Christmas* should fall out in the middle of Winter. It is the most dead uncomfortable Time of the Year, when the poor People would suffer very much from their Poverty and Cold, if they had not good Cheer, warm Fires, and *Christmas* Gambols to support them. I love to rejoice their poor Hearts at this Season, and to see the whole Village merry in my great Hall. I allow a double Quantity of Malt to my small Beer, and set it a-running for twelve Days for every one that calls for it. I have always a Piece of cold Beef and a Mince-Pye upon the Table, and am wonderfully pleased to see my Tenants pass away a whole Evening in playing their innocents Tricks, and smutting one another." JOSEPH ADDISON.

THE OLD-TIME CHRISTMAS CHEER

The table was literally loaded with good cheer, and presented an epitome of country abundance, in this season of overflowing larders. A distinguished post was allotted to "ancient sirloin," as mine host termed it; being, as he added, "the standard of old English hospitality, and a joint of goodly presence, and full of expectation." There were several dishes quaintly decorated, and which had evidently something traditional in their embellishments; but about which, as I did not like to appear over-curious, I asked no questions.

I could not, however, but notice a pie, magnificently decorated with peacock's feathers, an imitation of the tail of that bird, which over-shadowed a considerable tract of the table. This, the 'Squire confessed, with some little hesitation, was a pheasant pie, though a peacock pie was certainly the most authentical; but there had been such a mortality among the peacocks this season, that he could not prevail upon himself to have one killed. . . .

When the cloth was removed the butler brought in a huge silver vessel, of rare and curious workmanship, which he placed before the 'Squire. Its appearance was hailed with acclamation; being the Wassail Bowl, so renowned in Christmas festivity. The contents had been prepared by the 'Squire himself; for it was a beverage, in the skilful mixture of which he particularly prided himself: alleging that it was too abstruse and complex for the comprehension of an ordinary servant. It was a potation, indeed, that might well make the heart of a toper leap within him; being composed of the richest and raciest wines, highly spiced and sweetened, with roasted apples bobbing about the surface.

The old gentleman's whole countenance beamed with a serene look of indwelling delight, as he stirred this mighty bowl. Having raised it to his lips, with a hearty wish of a merry Christmas to all present, he sent it brimming round the board, for everyone to follow his example, according to the primitive style; pronouncing it "the ancient fountain of good feeling, where all hearts met together."

There was much laughing and rallying, as the honest emblem of Christmas joviality circulated, and was kissed rather coyly by the ladies. When it reached Master Simon, he raised it in both hands, and with the air of a boon companion, struck up an old Wassail Chanson. WASHINGTON IRVING.

THE FESTIVITIES AT DINGLEY DELL

From the center of the ceiling of this kitchen, old Wardle had just suspended with his own hands a huge branch of mistletoe, and this same branch of mistletoe instantaneously gave rise to a scene of general and most delightful struggling and confusion; in the midst of which Mr. Pickwick, with a gallantry which would have done honour to a descendant of Lady Trollimglower herself, took the old lady by the hand, led her beneath the mystic branch, and saluted her in all courtesy and decorum. The old lady submitted to this piece of practical politeness with all the dignity which befitted so important and serious a solemnity, but the younger ladies not being so thoroughly imbued with a superstitious veneration of the custom, or imagining that the value of a salute is very much enhanced if it cost a little trouble to obtain it, screamed and struggled, and ran into corners, and threatened and remonstrated, and did everything but leave the room, until some of the less adventurous gentlemen were on the point of desisting, when they all at once found it useless to desist any longer, and submitted to be kissed with a good grace. Mr. Winkle kissed the young lady with the black eyes, and Mr. Snodgrass kissed Emily; and Mr. Weller, not being particular about the form of being under the mistletoe, kissed Emma and the other female servants, just as he caught them. As to the poor relations, they kissed everybody, not even excepting the plainer portion of the young-lady visitors, who, in their excessive confusion, ran right under the mistletoe, directly it was hung up, without knowing it! Wardle stood with his back to the fire, surveying the whole scene, with the utmost satisfaction; and the fat boy took the opportunity of appropriating to his own use, and summarily devouring, a particularly fine mince-pie, that had been carefully put by for someone else.

Now the screaming had subsided, and faces were in a glow and curls in a tangle, and Mr. Pickwick, after kissing the old lady as before mentioned, was standing under the mistletoe, looking with a very pleased countenance on all that was passing around him, when the young lady with the black eyes, after a little whispering with the other young ladies, made a sudden dart forward, and, putting her arm around Mr. Pickwick's neck, saluted him affectionately on the left cheek; and before Mr. Pickwick distinctly knew what was the matter, he was surrounded by the whole body, and kissed by every one of them.

It was a pleasant thing to see Mr. Pickwick in the center of the group, now pulled this way, and then that, and first kissed on the chin and then on the nose, and then on the spectacles, and to hear the peals of laughter which were raised on every side; but it was a still more pleasant thing to see Mr. Pickwick, blinded shortly afterwards with a silk handkerchief, falling up against the wall, and scrambling into corners, and going through all the mysteries of blind-man's buff, with the utmost relish of the game, until at last he caught one of the poor relations; and then had to evade the blind-man himself, which he did with a nimbleness and agility that elicited the admiration and applause of all beholders. The poor relations caught just the people whom they thought would like it; and when the game flagged, got caught themselves. When they were all tired of blind-man's buff, there was a great game at snapdragon, and when fingers enough were burned with that, and all the raisins gone, they sat down by the huge fire of blazing logs to a substantial supper, and a mighty bowl of wassail, something smaller than an ordinary wash-house copper, in which the hot apples were hissing and bubbling with a rich look, and a jolly sound, that were perfectly irresistible.

"This," said Mr. Pickwick, looking round him, "this is, indeed, comfort."

"Our invariable custom," replied Mr. Wardle. "Everybody sits down with us on Christmas Eve, as you see them now—servants and all; and here we wait till the clock strikes twelve, to usher Christmas in, and while away the time with forfeits and old stories. Trundle, my boy, rake up the fire."

Up flew the bright sparks in myriads as the logs were stirred, and the deep red blaze sent forth a rich glow, that penetrated into the furthest corner of the room, and cast its cheerful tint on every face. CHARLES DICKENS.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE OLD TOWN

Wax candles are the only real thing for a Christmas-tree, candles of wax that mingle their perfume with that of the burning fir, not the by-product of some coal-oil or other abomination. They can be watched, and too many candles are tawdry, anyhow. Also, red apples, oranges, and old-fashioned cornucopias made of coloured paper, and made at home, look a hundred times better and fitter in the green; and so do drums and toy trumpets and wald-horns, and a rocking-horse reined up in front that need not have cost forty dollars, or anything like it.

I am thinking of one, or rather two, a little piebald team with a wooden seat between for which mother certainly did not give over seventy-five cents at the store, that, as "Belcher and Mamie"—the name was bestowed on the beasts at sight by Kate, aged three, who bossed the playroom—gave a generation of romping children more happiness than all the expensive railroads and trolley-cars and steam engines that are considered indispensable to keeping Christmas nowadays. And the Noah's Ark with Noah and his wife and all the animals that went two by two—ah, well, I haven't set out to preach a sermon on extravagance that makes no one happier, but I wish—— JACOB A. RIIS.

The Long Exile

By COUNT LYOF NIKOLAIEVITCH TOLSTOY

Translated by Nathan Haskell Dole

"God sees the truth, but bides his time."

ONCE upon a time there lived in the city of Vladimir a young merchant named Aksenof. He had two shops and a house.

Aksenof himself had a ruddy complexion and curly hair; he was a very jolly fellow and a good singer. When he was young he used to drink too much, and when he was tipsy he was turbulent; but after his marriage he ceased drinking, and only occasionally had a spree.

One time in summer Aksenof was going to Nizhni to the great Fair. As he was about to bid his family good-by, his wife said to him:

"Ivan Dmitrievitch, do not go to-day; I had a dream, and dreamed that some misfortune befell you."

Aksenof laughed at her, and said: "You are always afraid that I shall go on a spree at the Fair."

His wife said: "I myself know not what I am afraid of, but I had such a strange dream: you seemed to be coming home from town, and you took off your hat, and I looked, and your head was all gray."

Aksenof laughed. "That means good luck. See, I am going now. I will bring you some rich remembrances."

And he bade his family farewell and set off.

When he had gone half his journey, he fell in with a merchant of his acquaintance, and the two stopped together at the same tavern for the night. They took tea together, and went to sleep in two adjoining rooms.

Aksenof did not care to sleep long; he awoke in the middle of the night, and in order that he might get a good start while it was cool he aroused his driver and bade him harness up, went down into the smoky hut, settled his account with the landlord, and started on his way.

After he had driven forty versts, he again stopped to get something to eat; he rested in the vestibule of the inn, and when it was noon, he went to the doorstep and ordered the samovar got ready; then he took out his guitar and began to play.

Suddenly a troïka with a bell dashed up to the inn, and from the equipage leaped an official with two soldiers; he came directly up to Aksenof and asked: "Who are you? Where did you come from?"

Aksenof answered without hesitation, and asked him if he would not have a glass of tea with him.

But the official kept on with his questions: "Where did you spend last night? Were you alone or with a merchant? Have you seen the merchant this morning? Why did you leave so early this morning?"

Aksenof wondered why he was questioned so closely; but he told everything just as it was, and he asked. "Why do you ask me so many questions? I am not a thief or a murderer. I am on my own business; there is nothing to question me about."

Then the official called up the soldiers, and said: "I am the police inspector, and I have made these inquiries of you because the merchant with whom you spent last night has been stabbed. Show me your things, and you men search him."

They went into the tavern, brought in the trunk and bag, and began to open and search them. Suddenly the police inspector pulled out from the bag a knife, and demanded: "Whose knife is this?"

Aksenof looked and saw a knife covered with blood taken from his bag, and he was frightened.

"And whose blood is that on the knife?"

Aksenof tried to answer, but he could not articulate his words:

"I—I—don't—know— I— That knife —it is—not mine——"

Then the police inspector said: "This morning the merchant was found stabbed to death in his bed. No one except you could have done it. The tavern was locked on the inside, and there was no one in the tavern except yourself. And here is the bloody knife in your bag, and your guilt is evident in your face. Tell me how you killed him and how much money you took from him." Aksenof swore that he had not done it, that he had not seen the merchant after he had drunk tea with him, that the only money that he had with him—eight thousand rubles—was his own, and that the knife was not his.

But his voice trembled, his face was pale, and he was all quivering with fright, like a guilty person.

The police inspector called the soldiers, commanded them to bind Aksenof and take him to the wagon.

When they took him to the wagon with

his feet tied, Aksenof crossed himself and burst into tears.

They confiscated Aksenof's possessions and his money, and took him to the next city and threw him into prison.

They sent to Vladimir to make inquiries about Aksenof's character, and all the merchants and citizens of Vladimir declared that Aksenof, when he was young, used to drink and was wild, but that now he was a worthy man. Then he was brought up for judgment. He was sentenced for having killed the merchant and for having robbed him of twenty thousand rubles.

Aksenof's wife was dumfounded by the event, and did not know what to think. Her children were still small, and there was one at the breast. She took them all with her and journeyed to the city where her husband was imprisoned.

At first they would not grant her admittance, but afterward she got permission from the chief, and was taken to her husband.

When she saw him in his prison garb, in chains together with murderers, she fell to the floor, and it was a long time before she recovered from her swoon. Then she placed her children around her, sat down amid them, and began to tell him about their domestic affairs, and to ask him about everything that had happened to him.

He told her the whole story.

She asked: "What is to be the result of it?"

He said: "We must petition the Czar. It is impossible that an innocent man should be condemned."

The wife said she already had sent in a petition to the Czar, but that the petition had not been granted. Aksenof said nothing, but was evidently very much downcast.

Then his wife said: "You see the dream that I had, when I dreamed that you had become grayheaded, meant something, after all. Already your hair has begun to turn gray with trouble. You ought to have stayed at home that time." And she began to tear her hair, and said: "Vanya, my dearest husband, tell your wife the truth: Did you commit that crime or not?"

Aksenof said: "So you, too, have no faith in me!" And he wrung his hands and wept.

Then a soldier came and said that it was time for the wife and children to go. And Aksenof for the last time bade farewell to his family.

When his wife was gone, Aksenof began to think over all that they had said. When he remembered that his wife had also distrusted him, and had asked him if he had murdered the merchant, he said to himself: "It is evident that no one but God can know the truth of the matter, and He is the only one to ask for mercy, and He is the only one from whom to expect it."

And from that time Aksenof ceased to send in petitions, ceased to hope, and only prayed to God. Aksenof was sentenced to be knouted, and then to exile with hard labour. And so it was done.

He was flogged with the knout, and then, when the wounds from the knout were healed, he was sent with other exiles to Siberia.

Aksenof lived twenty-six years in the mines. The hair on his head had become white as now, and his beard had grown long, thin, and gray. All his gaiety had vanished.

He was bent, his gait was slow, he spoke little, he never laughed, and he spent much of his time in prayer.

Aksenof had learned while in prison to make boots, and with the money that he earned he bought the "Book of Martyrs," and used to read it when it was light enough in prison, and on holidays he would go to the prison church, read the Gospels, and sing in the choir, for his voice was still strong and good.

The authorites liked Aksenof for his submissiveness, and his prison associates respected him and called him "Grandfather" and the "man of God." Whenever they had petitions to be presented, Aksenof was always chosen to carry them to the authorities; and when quarrels arose among the prisoners, they always came to Aksenof as umpire.

Aksenof never received any letters from home, and he knew not whether his wife and children were alive.

One time some new convicts came to the prison. In the evening all the old convicts gathered around the newcomers, and began to ply them with questions as to the cities or villages from which this one or that had come, and what their crimes were.

At this time Aksenof was sitting on his bunk, near the strangers, and, with bowed head, was listening to what was said.

One of the new convicts was a tall, healthy-looking old man of sixty years, with a close-cropped gray beard. He was telling why he had been arrested. He said:

"And so, brothers, I was sent here for nothing. I unharnessed a horse from a postboy's sledge, and they caught me in it, and insisted that I was stealing it. 'But,' says I, 'I only wanted to go a little faster, so I whipped up the horse. And besides, the driver was a friend of mine. It's all right,' says I. 'No,' say they; 'you were stealing it.' But they did not know what and where I had stolen. I have done things which long ago would have sent me here, but I was not found out; and now they have sent me here without any justice in it. But what's the use of grumbling? I have been in Siberia before. They did not keep me here very long, though——"

"Where did you come from?" asked one of the convicts.

"Well, we came from the city of Vladimir; we are citizens of that place. My name is Makar, and my father's name was Semyon."

Aksenof raised his head and asked:

"Tell me, Semyonitch, have you ever heard of the Aksenofs, merchants in Vladimir city? Are they alive?"

"Indeed, I have heard of them! They are rich merchants, though their father is in Siberia. It seems he was just like any of the rest of us sinners. And now tell me, Grandfather, what you were sent here for?"

Aksenof did not like to speak of his misfortune; he sighed, and said:

"Twenty-six years ago I was condemned to hard labour on account of my sins."

Makar Semyonof said:

"But what was your crime?"

Aksenof replied: "I must, therefore, have deserved this."

But he would not tell or give any further particulars; the other convicts, however, related why Aksenof had been sent to Siberia. They told how on the road some one had killed a merchant, and put the knife into Aksenof's luggage, and how he had been unjustly punished for this.

When Makar heard this, he glanced at Aksenof, clasped his hands round his knees, and said:

"Well, now, that's wonderful! You have been growing old, Grandfather!"

They began to ask him what he thought was wonderful, and where he had seen Aksenof. But Makar did not answer; he only repeated:

"A miracle, boys! how wonderful that we should meet again!"

And when he said these words, it came over Aksenof that perhaps this man might know who it was that had killed the merchant. And he said:

"Did you ever hear of that crime, Semyonitch, or did you ever see me before?"

"Of course I heard of it! The country was full of it. But it happened a long time ago. And I have forgotten what I heard," said Makar.

"Perhaps you heard who killed the merchant?" asked Aksenof.

Makar laughed, and said:

"Why, of course the man who had the knife in his bag killed him. If any one put the knife in your things and was not caught doing it—it would have been impossible. For how could they have put the knife in your bag? Was it not standing close by your head? And you would have heard it, wouldn't you?"

As soon as Aksenof heard these words he felt convinced that this was the very man who had killed the merchant.

He stood up and walked away. All that night he was unable to sleep. Deep melancholy came upon him, and he began to call back the past in his imagination.

He imagined his wife as she had been when for the last time she had come to see him in the prison. She seemed to stand before him exactly as though she were alive, and he saw her face and her eyes, and he seemed to hear her words and her laugh.

Then his imagination brought up his children before him; one a little boy in a little fur coat, and the other on his mother's breast.

And he imagined himself as he was at that time, young and happy. He remembered how he had sat on the steps of the tavern when they arrested him, and how his soul was full of joy as he played on his guitar.

And he remembered the place of execution where they had knouted him, and the knoutsman, and the people standing around, and the chains and the convicts, and all his twenty-six years of prison life, and he remembered his old age. And such melancholy came upon Aksenof that he was tempted to put an end to himself.

"And all on account of this criminal!" said Aksenof to himself.

And then he began to feel such anger against Makar Semyonof that he almost fell upon him, and was crazy with desire to pay off the load of vengeance. He repeated prayers all night, but could not recover his calm. When day came he walked by Makar and did not look at him.

Thus passed two weeks. Aksenof was not able to sleep, and such melancholy had come over him that he did not know what to do.

One time during the night, as he happened to be passing through the prison, he saw that the soil was disturbed under one of the bunks. He stopped to examine it. Suddenly Makar crept from under the bunk and looked at Aksenof with a startled face.

Aksenof was about to pass on so as not to see him, but Makar seized his arm, and told him how he had been digging a passage under the wall, and how every day he carried the dirt out in his bootlegs and emptied it in the street when they went out to work. He said:

"If you only keep quiet, old man, I will get you out too. But if you tell on me, they will flog me; but afterward I will make it hot for you. I will kill you."

When Aksenof saw his enemy, he trembled all over with rage, twitched away his arm, and said: "I have no reason to make my escape, and to kill me would do no harm; you killed me long ago. But as to telling on you or not, I shall do as God sees fit to have me."

On the next day, when they took the convicts out to work, the soldiers discovered where Makar had been digging in the ground; they began to make a search, and found the hole. The chief came into the prison and asked every one, "Who was digging that hole?"

All denied it. Those who knew did not name Makar, because they were aware that he would be flogged half to death for such an attempt.

Then the chief came to Aksenof. He knew that Aksenof was a truthful man, and he said: "Old man, you are truthful; tell me before God who did this."

Makar was standing near, in great excitement, and did not dare to look at Aksenof.

Aksenof's hands and lips trembled, and it was some time before he could speak a word. He said to himself: "If I shield him— But why should I forgive him when he has been my ruin? Let him suffer for my sufferings! But shall I tell on him? They will surely flog him. But what difference does it make what I think of him? Will it be any the easier for me?"

Once more the chief demanded:

"Well, old man, tell the truth! Who dug the hole?"

Aksenof glanced at Makar, and then said:

"I cannot tell, your Honour. God does not bid me tell. I will not tell. Do with me as you please; I am in your power."

In spite of all the chief's efforts, Aksenof would say nothing more. And so they failed to find out who dug the hole.

On the next night as Aksenof was lying on his bunk, and almost asleep, he heard some one come along and sit down at his feet.

He peered through the darkness and saw that it was Makar.

Aksenof asked:

"What do you wisn of me? What are you doing here?"

Makar remained silent. Aksenof arose, and said:

"What do you want? Go away, or else I will call the guard."

Makar went up close to Aksenof and said in a whisper:

"Ivan Dmitritch, forgive me!"

Aksenof said: "What have I to forgive you?"

"It was I who killed the merchant and put the knife in your bag. And I was going to kill you too, but there was a noise in the yard; I thrust the knife in your bag, and slipped out of the window."

Aksenof said nothing, and he did not know what to say. Makar got down from the bunk, knelt on the ground, and said:

"Ivan Dmitritch, forgive me, forgive me for Christ's sake. I will confess that I killed the merchant—they will pardon you. You will be able to go home." Aksenof said:

"It is easy for you to say that, but how could I endure it? Where should I go now? My wife is dead! my children have forgotten me. I have nowhere to go."

Makar did not rise; he beat his head on the ground, and said:

"Ivan Dmitritch, forgive me! When they flogged me with the knout, it was easier to bear than it is now to look at you. And you had pity on me after all this—you did not tell on me. Forgive me, for Christ's sake! Forgive me, though I am a cursed villain!"

And the man began to sob.

When Aksenof heard Maker Semyonof sobbing, he himself burst into tears, and said:

"God will forgive you; maybe I am a hundred times worse than you are!"

And suddenly he felt a wonderful peace in his soul. And he ceased to mourn for his home, and had no desire to leave the prison, but only thought of his last hour.

Makar would not listen to Aksenof, and confessed his crime.

When they came to let Aksenof go home, he was dead.

Doctor Cymbalus

By LUIGI CAPUANA

Roma, 1 dicembre 1888.

Luigi Capuana

I

FOR two years Hermann Strauss had been working assiduously upon his *New System of Nature;* but on that particular day his meditations had been too intense. Lost in the immensity of a problem of profoundest metaphysics, he had ended by falling asleep; and he had been slumbering for more than an hour, when he was brusquely awakened by an insistent knocking at his door.

"Come in!" he grumbled, yawning and stretching himself upon the sofa.

There appeared an ample cap, enveloping the grizzled head of an old woman.

"There is a young man to see you," mumbled the ample cap.

"Show him up," answered Hermann. "Who the deuce can it be?"

He had hardly ceased to ponder on this question when a good-looking youth, tall, fair-haired and pale, and dressed as if for a journey, presented himself on the threshold.

"Why, William Usinger!"

The two greeted each other affectionately.

"Have you just arrived to-day?"

"Yes, and I leave again to-morrow. I need your help."

"Well, you shall have it. But sit down, have a pipe with me."

"Thanks."

Usinger laid a heavy package of papers, carefully sealed, upon the table.

"I am starting for America," he said. "Quite a way off, isn't it?"

"It takes a little longer to come back, that's all the difference. Nowadays, we go to the ends of the earth and return safely."

"It may happen that we don't return."

"Certainly, if we prefer to stay in the other place. But, of course, it is your wedding trip!" exclaimed Hermann, suddenly slapping his brow, and opening his blue eyes to their widest behind his near-sighted lenses.

Usinger's silence surprised him.

"You are not married yet?"

"No. But let us speak of serious things. I am here on a matter of grave importance."

"You say you are not married?"

"No!" answered William, with increased curtness.

"But, tell me——"

"I am starting for America?"

"But what on earth has happened?"

"The simplest thing imaginable—Ida is to marry someone else."

"You can't have thrown her over? Why, you were all the time writing me how devotedly you loved her!"

"No, she did it; she prefers to marry a Frenchman!"

"A Frenchman! Of all things!" exclaimed Hermann, striking a resounding blow upon his table top.

"Oh, it's all the same to me, since I am no longer the favoured one."

"My poor William! You must try to forget, you must try——"

"You are wrong there. There are two women who will never lose their place in my heart: Ida and my mother!"

"By the way, how about your mother?"

William shook his head sadly. "She refuses to receive me."

"Your mother must be greatly changed."

"It is Ida's work! I have in my possession irrefutable proofs."

"My poor William!"

"I feel old and decrepit at the age of twenty-five. Without family, without affection, without hopes or illusions, what reason have I for remaining here among you?"

"You are right. Go to America. Leave this old Europe, that is crumbling to pieces all around us! Go to America, and a pleasant journey to you! It won't take long over there to mend your heart. A pleasant journey! But it hurts to have to say good-by, perhaps forever!"

"That is precisely the motive of my visit," said William, deeply moved. "This sealed envelop contains some important papers as well as my last wishes."

"Your last wishes?"

"As regards all that I am leaving behind me in Europe," explained Usinger, with a smile. "For the purpose of executing my will, there is no need of waiting for my death. As soon as I embark, I practically cease to live for any of those here at home—and that will be within three or four days. I am not going mad; I assure you of that, so that you won't get any such idea into your head. I have sold everything that I possess. This package contains, in bills, notes, and securities, practically the entire sum that I was able to realize."

"But how about your traveling expenses? And your future needs?"

"Don't worry; I have thought of all that. Do you accept?"

"With all my heart!"

Hermann had tears in his eyes. William, ghastly pale, was making brave efforts to keep his self-control.

"Hermann," said Usinger, after a few moments of silence, "promise me that you will not open that package any sooner than the time that I have requested you to."

"I will wait even longer, my dear fellow, if that would suit you better. I already blame myself for not trying harder to turn you from your sad resolution. Put off leaving at least a day or two longer!"

"I can't do it, I have too many things to straighten out. I even thought, in order to save time, of sending you the package by post, but changed my mind. I felt that I must see you again before leaving Europe."

"Thank you, my dear William! You have really given me pleasure! Where are you stopping?"

"At the *Blaue Stern.*"

"I will look you up there. We can at least be together till this evening."

When Hermann Strauss was left alone, he lit his big pipe, jammed his wolf-skin cap low upon his head, folded his arms, and remained for a long time sunk in a brown study, with his eyes fixed upon the bust of Hegel directly facing him.

All of a sudden he started violently, flung himself upon the package, broke the seals, seized the single sheet of writing that it contained, and before he had read halfway down the page, groaned aloud.

"If only I can get there in time! If only I can get there in time!" he muttered distractedly, as he flung himself out of the house.

II

THE *Blaue Stern* was situated at the opposite corner of the city.

Hermann passed down the length of an alley, rounded a corner, came out upon a small open square, followed the windings of two other dingy, crooked little streets, issued upon the main avenue, and forged straight ahead, running breathlessly, heedless of the crowds that stopped to gaze after him. When he reached the portal of the hotel, he had no breath remaining.

"William Usinger?" he inquired of the porter nodding somnolently within his lodge.

The porter shook himself, rubbed his eyes, and after a glance at Hermann's face, called out:

"Resi."

A woman appeared, of thirty and upwards, a typical peasant, fat, blond, and unctuous. The porter indicated that Hermann could inquire of her.

"Is William Usinger in?" repeated Hermann, feeling himself all the time on glowing coals.

"I will find out at once."

And she disappeared within the doorway from which she had just emerged. Those minutes of suspense seemed to Hermann equal to a century. At last Resi returned, to say that Usinger had left the hotel quite early and had not yet come back.

"His luggage is still here?" inquired Hermann, with growing agitation.

"He had no luggage."

"He must come back to pay his bill?"

"He has already paid."

"Then where shall I find him? How am I to reach him before it is too late?"

Hermann stamped his feet, wrung his hands, swore energetically, glanced uncertainly first one way, then another, when all of a sudden Usinger stood before him.

"Thank God!" cried Hermann, rushing upon him, as though anticipating that he would attempt to escape.

"You opened that envelop!" asserted Usinger, with a face of marked severity.

"I did!" As a matter of precaution, Hermann was still holding him by the lapel of his coat.

They mounted the stairs in silence. On entering his room, Usinger flung his traveling cap into one corner and let himself fall heavily into an easy-chair. Hermann remained standing in front of him.

"Have you lost your mind?" He uttered the reproach affectionately.

"It is quite likely. Even so, what do you hope to do?"

"My duty as a friend."

"An empty duty!"

"William!"

"Would you try to persuade me to want to live, knowing all that you do? Does there happen to be any way for a man to tear his heart out of his breast, and yet not die? Have you the means of rendering me cold and insensible as marble?"

"Yes, yes!" exclaimed Hermann, "I have."

There had flashed through his mind, as Usinger spoke those last words, an unforeseen gleam of hope, and it prompted him to embrace his friend effusively. William continued to stare at him, dumfounded. Could it be his friend's brain, rather than his own, that had given way?

But Hermann only smiled and rubbed his hands together joyously.

"Have you the courage to submit to a rather painful surgical operation?"

Usinger made a gesture of indignant denial.

"Do you take me for an infant?"

"Do you feel that you have the courage to undergo a rather painful surgical operation? I ask this in all seriousness."

"To what purpose?"

"So that you will become cold and insensible as marble. Have you the courage? Yes or no?"

"Oh, yes," said William, "but the thing is impossible."

"Less impossible than you imagine. You surely know, at least by reputation, Dr. Franz Cymbalus, one of the greatest, indeed, perhaps the greatest of living physiologists? His discoveries regarding the nervous system are among the most marvelous conquests of modern science. He was one of my instructors, and is very fond of me. We will go together to see him, for Doctor Cymbalus can save you!"

"Then he must be a god, this man?"

"A man of science,—which is almost the same thing!"

"Don't think that I am deceiving myself," said Usinger. "If I consent to visit him, it is only to satisfy you. Does he live far from here?"

"In his own villa, a few miles outside the city."

"Come on, then, let us be moving."

Yet, to the deep breath of satisfaction that Hermann slowly expelled, Usinger's only answer was an incredulous shrug of the shoulders.

III

Doctor Cymbalus was seated upon a wooden bench, with two children upon his knees. He was smiling and caressing them, and replying indulgently to the vivacious questionings of those two little golden heads.

"*Domine, bona dies*," said Hermann from behind the gate, at the same time lifting his cap from his head.

The doctor recognized him, set the two children down upon the ground, and while they quickly vanished down a by-path, he went forward to open the gate, waving his hand in affectionate greeting.

"My young friend," he said, ushering in the two visitors, "I am heartily glad to see you again!" Then to Usinger, "I am sorry, sir, that I cannot say the same to you, but if my memory does not mislead me, I do not think that I have had the pleasure of seeing you before. You are not, on that account, any the less welcome in my house."

"This is William Usinger," said Hermann.

Usinger bowed very low. Doctor Cymbalus extended his hand.

"Master, this friend of mine has need of your science," said Hermann, smiling in the direction of Usinger.

"Is he ill?"

"He is more than ill; he has decided to kill himself."

"What, a man as young as he is?"

"Yes, master, as young as he is!"

"He certainly has not come here to ask me to furnish him the means," said the doctor. "But let us go into the house. We can discuss the case there more at our ease."

The doctor led his two guests into his private study; a chaos of books, papers and maps, instruments, jars and vials, anatomical preparations and human skeletons. Usinger, as he entered, felt cold shivers pass down his spine.

The doctor seated himself in his easy-chair, before his study table; the two friends took their seats opposite him.

The picture offered by the aged scientist was gentle and serene. His lofty brow, furrowed with deep wrinkles; his eyes, keen and brilliant in spite of half a century of vigils on behalf of science and humanity; his lips almost always smiling; the repose of his manner, the kindness of his words: all these things revealed in him a lofty nature, one of those that, rising above the knowledge of being wiser than others, attain the virtue of humility that makes them venerable.

"And so you wish to die?" asked Doctor Cymbalus, in a tone of paternal irony.

"Yes, honoured master, I do," replied Usinger formally.

While Hermann proceeded to sketch, in broad strokes, William's tragic story, Doctor Cymbalus held his head bent low, and his eyes half closed; his lips were pressed together in profound commiseration.

"I am unable to approve of your determination," he said to Usinger, when Hermann had finished speaking. "My studies have inspired in me an immense horror of the work of destruction that you are contemplating. This, perhaps, is because I find myself, better than anyone else, in a position to measure the gravity of it. My age and my studies authorize me to speak to you in these terms. Your misfortunes are great; but you forget that Nature takes nothing away without offering compensations. There are many living creatures in this world that appear condemned to perpetual servitude to those higher in the scale; they are born, they live, they die, without any apparent profit to themselves. Among mankind the same thing happens, both in civil life and in intellectual life. Genius might be defined as a tremendous slavery; science, as a horrible bondage. All the glories and all the riches of this world are not enough to compensate for the smallest part of the pains which the artist and the scientist endure in the creation of their works and in the pursuit of truth, which is also one form of creation.

"You say that you wish to die, because you have missed the consolation of domestic affections; but how do you know that Nature may not have destined you to expend the forces of your heart and your intellect in a sphere far wider than that of the family? Society is composed of so many concentric circles. The family occupies the inmost place; humanity, the outermost, at least in the world which we inhabit. Outside of the family comes the city; beyond the city, the nation; and again beyond that, the family of nations: an immense field, marvelously fertile, in which that fullness of affection now rioting in your heart could find a thousand outlets. How many avenues lie open to your activity, in education, politics, the army, commerce, art, manufactures, science, and so on, down to the least esteemed of occupations! By a sublime fatality, every smallest influence of every smallest atom contributes, in its own degree, to the great edifice of progress. All matter is being transformed, and in turn it transforms what we call by the name of spirit and thought. Have you ever studied the beneficent law of labour, which is the most perfect of all explanations of love? No, of course not. To your own misfortune, you have always been centered upon yourself; you have increased, with cruel complacency, the weight of your troubles; by isolating yourself, you have already begun that rash work of destruction that you are now planning to complete. Perhaps you have never experienced the consolation that comes from helping your fellow men——"

"Oh, yes, I have," interrupted Usinger, "though very likely I am a good deal of an egoist, for I have always thought, first of all, of myself alone. I admire the grandeur of all things you have said to me, and I am sorry to find that they leave me indifferent,—that is to say, they are on too high a level to touch my heart, my nature, perhaps even my strength of will. But if all your science, professor, has no other means of aiding me, I must hasten to offer my apologies for these few moments of intrusion. You owe them to my good friend, Strauss. I hope that you will pardon both of us."

"Master!" exclaimed Hermann, extending his hands towards the doctor in a gesture of entreaty, "Master, you must save my poor, mind-sick friend at any cost! I brought him here in full confidence that you would be able to save him."

"But in what manner, my dear Strauss?" demanded the doctor.

"I remembered, all of a sudden, that extraordinary discovery of yours, which you once told me had filled you with terror; that discovery which you mean to carry with you to the tomb, sooner than place in the hands of childish humanity a weapon so terrible and so easily abused. Well, now, master, that discovery might save from destruction a vigourous life and a powerful intellect. Will you not consent to reach out your hand to save, at least in part, a human being already determined to destroy himself entirely?"

Doctor Cymbalus fixed his steady gaze upon William Usinger. The latter awaited calmly the scientist's decision.

"And if I should reply that I could do nothing for you?"

"I should kill myself."

"But of course you do not understand what it is that Hermann asks of me?"

"On the contrary, sir, I know that it involves an operation, after which I would remain cold and insensible as a man devoid of heart."

"It is an operation which any ignorant barber would be able to perform. But I shrink from laying my hand upon a perfectly sound human being, to injure him beyond repair. I do not wish to commit a sacrilege. A needle, a lancet would suffice to disturb the marvelous harmony of your organism. A certain part of you would perish, as though by magic. You would become a new man, a creature without affections——"

"That is all I ask," interrupted Usinger. "All my sufferings come from my heart. If I were insensible, if——"

"Ah, but the day may come when you will bitterly regret the loss of what you now wish to destroy!"

"No, that is not possible; I suffer too much!"

"Note this well! When that day comes, science will be impotent to give you the least aid. That is her inferiority in the face of nature, it is her one real misery. Scornfully, like the base Indian in the legend, you would fling into the ocean the most precious gem of your emotions. But no one, note this well!—I repeat, no one can ever again bring it to the surface for you. Do you still persist in your determination?"

"More than ever, my dear sir!"

Doctor Cymbalus rested his elbows upon the table, placed his head between his hands, and remained for at least two minutes meditating. Hermann sat watching his master with bated breath. William waited tranquilly, letting the brim of his traveling cap slip round and round between his fingers.

"It would have pleased me better," said the doctor, "if my advice had been of more service to you than my science. Life is a beautiful thing; take an old man's word for it, who cannot put off much longer the hour of leaving it. You don't agree with me? God grant that some day or other you may not have to own that I was right!"

Doctor Cymbalus wrote a prescription on a sheet of paper and handed it to Hermann:

"After six days of this treatment, bring your friend back. We will make the attempt."

Hermann impetuously seized his master's hand and covered it with kisses. Even William felt himself strangely and deeply moved.

Just a week later, Hermann and William knocked at the outer gate of the doctor's villa.

In one corner of a large and airy chamber, the bed had been made ready for the patient. Upon a round table in the center of the room stood two bottles containing red and blackish liquids, folded bandages, absorbent cotton, and a small case of surgical instruments.

William beheld these preparations with an indifferent eye.

Doctor Cymbalus instructed him to place himself upon the bed, then proceeded to administer the chloroform.

While Hermann, aided by the doctor's attendant, turned his poor friend, William, face downward, the doctor extracted from the instrument case two needles and a lancet, prepared two bandages, took little pads of the absorbent cotton and poured over them a few drops from the bottles of red and black liquids, which straightway foamed up as they united.

The doctor was absorbed in thought. "Leave me alone," he said, "and do not come back until I ring."

Ten minutes passed by, during which Hermann, with his ear close against the panel of the door, heard no sound from the chamber except the hurried steps of the doctor, passing from the bed to the table and from the table to the bed. Although he had not the slightest doubt as to the outcome, he was extremely agitated, trembling nervously, and dreading the moment when the door of William's room should re-open.

The doctor rang.

"Hold yourselves in readiness," he said, as he saw Hermann and the attendant enter. "As soon as he awakens, he will be seized with terrible convulsions."

A faint, prolonged moaning presently announced that Usinger was recovering his senses.

The cotton compressions, held by the two bandages at the juncture of the spinal column and the base of the brain, revealed the point at which the operation had been performed. Not a single trace of blood was to be seen.

William stirred his arms with a convulsive movement, then let them fall back again, as if lifeless. He tried to turn himself over, but failed in the attempt. They left him free to try. The doctor had advised them to interfere only in case he should attempt to disturb the bandages.

The moaning became, little by little, a prolonged howl. William began to gnaw the pillows, to tear at the sheets and mattress with his nails; he was twisting and writhing all over, and constantly screaming:

"Oh, oh! I am dying! Oh, oh! I am dying!"

When they saw that he was attempting to tear away the bandages, Hermann and the doctor's man seized him by the wrists. He was livid, his features distorted, his wide-open eyes staring horribly. "Oh, oh!" he continued to howl, "I am dying! I am dying!"

"Is there any danger, master?" demanded Hermann anxiously.

"Everything is going well," replied the doctor with that satisfied air of a scientist who has obtained a victory.

William remained for some minutes longer like an inert and lifeless body. Doctor Cymbalus kept feeling of his pulse.

"The convulsions are beginning again; they will be the last, but more violent than before."

The doctor had scarcely ceased speaking when the new access began, but it lasted only a short time. Usinger fell back, exhausted.

"Let him rest," said Doctor Cymbalus. "Fever is setting in already. That is nature's protest against the violation of her laws!"

William slept tranquilly four hours without interruption. When he awoke, his bewildered glance fixed itself intently upon the surrounding objects and persons, as if trying to make sure that he recognized them; then the glance passed on without revealing whether he had really recognized them or not. His hands moved aimlessly in the air, and plucked at the coverlet; then he began passing his fingers gropingly over his face, his breast, his stomach, and then began again their fumbling search for some invisible object. His voice had become a low and broken lamentation, a sort of continuous sob. He remained in this state for two entire days. On the third day, he recognized Hermann and pressed his hand; and he smiled up at the doctor.

"I suffer a good deal," he said, "I suffer a good deal here," and he pointed to his breast.

"That is nothing," replied Doctor Cymbalus. "That will pass away."

When the latter removed the bandages, Hermann saw at the base of William's brain, and on the back of his neck, two exceedingly small scars, two tiny black scabs, and nothing more.

William felt himself, little by little, coming out of a state of utter confusion. His thoughts still rioted through his brain, slipped away from him, then returned again, like clouds tossed hither and thither by a tempest; and they began to arrange themselves in order, like a crowd of people who have poured pell-mell into a room and at last succeed in all finding their proper places. He understood that some extraordinary transformation must have taken place within him; he was conscious of an immense emptiness, and an ineffable sense of peace. But he remembered nothing clearly; he thought that it must all have been a dream.

Hermann, Doctor Cymbalus, the bed, the chamber, the operation he had undergone—were not all these things phantasms created by his delirious brain? Or was it possible that he had killed himself, and that this state of calm belonged to his new existence in a better world?

Finally he recovered his grip upon reality.

"*Consummatum est!*" Doctor Cymbalus told him, nodding his head sadly.

"You are the genius of goodness!" replied William.

"Say rather the genius of evil, capable of destroying, but not of building up again!"

"Ah, doctor, how glad I am that I did not listen to your advice! I am enjoying such peace and happiness as I did not suppose possible upon this earth!"

IV

AND indeed his happiness was genuine. The excessive tumult of his affections had been succeeded by a complete silence. There were sounds which seemed to hover around his ears, softly whispering their several notes, without ever making up their minds to enter in. There were colours which came and rested upon his eyes, with the delicate precaution of one who does not wish to have his presence known.

That mysterious word, uttered by the sadness of sunset, by the murmur of running water, the perfume of flowers, the broad sweep of open country, the serenity of quiet lakes, the bold uplift of mountains toward the sky, the resigned humility of intervening valleys; that mysterious word for which we all are seeking, which all of us alike—poets, novelists, painters, sculptors, and musicians—are striving our best to reproduce; that living and eternal word of universal Nature, Usinger no longer heard and no longer understood. He lived as though surrounded by an immense solitude, in the midst of vast ruins, of a world that once was animate. And he felt himself happy, and was filled with pride at the sense of his own isolation.

How superior he was to every one else around him! Nothing succeeded any longer in making the slightest impression upon him!

He remembered his mother, he remembered Ida Blümer, the only beings whom he had ever deeply loved, and through whom he had suffered cruelly. But in remembering them, he no longer experienced either emotion or regret.

He was revenged upon them! And he rejoiced in his triumph.

During this time, unforeseen events had brought dire confusion into the palace of the Countess K. The effect of calamity was to soften the mother's heart, and repentance and remorse brought her to the house of the son whom she had so heartlessly cast off, and on one occasion bidden her servants to turn from her very door.

William was now living with Hermann. The same old woman who on a former day had ushered him into his friend's study now came to announce that a fine lady was waiting below to see him.

"Show her up," replied Usinger, laying aside his work.

A lady in mourning, with a heavy veil over her face, presented herself in the doorway. She seemed to hesitate to enter. William advanced to meet her. The lady raised her veil and remained standing, with bowed head, before him.

"My mother!" He showed not the slightest emotion.

But the mother, overwhelmed by so cold a greeting, gazed desperately into his face, yet failed to discover the slightest indication of repressed feeling. Her son met her gaze steadily, but with unwavering tranquillity.

At the heart-rending cry, uttered by the countess, as she fled from the room aghast, William shrugged his shoulders, and turned back to his table, to complete a half finished figure in geometry.

Eight days later, as he passed the building where they keep on view the bodies of such persons as have perished by a sudden or violent death, he noticed a great crowd gathered around the entrance. Curiosity compelled him to go in.

Upon a bier lay the body of a young woman between eighteen and twenty years of age. She was beautiful and fashionably dressed; her hair was drawn back from her forehead and from her neck; her dripping garments indicated the form of death that the unhappy girl had chosen to end her days.

"It is Ida Blümer," he said. "I can identify her."

He was taken before the commissioner and there made his deposition. The sight of that body had left him wholly indifferent.

V

Six years had passed.

What was the meaning of this vague and indefinable weariness which was beginning to creep into his regular and monotonous life? Why was it that the comparison of the past with the present, which had been the source of his greatest joy, was beginning to assume the tone of a mild reproof?

He was alarmed at these symptoms and sought for new distractions.

But how was he to escape his memories? He found himself pursued by them even in his dreams. Day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute, the weariness and the tedium grew upon him. He was unable to do anything that could check them; he found himself impotent to resist them.

"The great law of labour!"

But it was small help to him to remember this; he found himself unable to do any work. He grew weary and exhausted all too quickly. There was lacking in him some quality which would have made his work dear to him. His utter solitude began to terrify him. The saddest moments of his entire life seemed to him infinitely preferable to the death-like calm which the operation of Doctor Cymbalus had procured for him.

"Mother! Ida! Mother! Ida!" he would call aloud, shutting himself into his room and denying himself to all comers.

With these names he would try to rouse himself from the torpor that held him helpless in its terrible bonds.

But all in vain. Those words, Mother, Ida, echoed in his ears like two sounds that had never at any time had any significance for him.

Alas for those hours of sorrow and desperation and mortal anguish spent in gazing from a distance at the windows of his mother's palace, through many a winter night! Alas for the hours of agony when he sought in vain to win the attention of his mother who, in the absorption of holidays and guests, forgot his very existence! Ah! those were hours indeed! And when the furies of jealousy, the near projects of vengeance had turned his brain, after his betrayal by Ida Blümer,—what emotions! what divine suffering! And now nothing more, nothing at all!

One day he went in mad haste to see his mother.

The Countess K—— was preparing to start upon a lengthy journey. At the moment when William was ascending the palace stairs and recalling the sad scene of several years earlier, she was in the tasteful little sitting-room stretched upon a sofa with her face between her hands, weeping. A maid was removing various articles from a piece of antique furniture inlaid with ivory and pearl, and as she named each object, she waited until her mistress answered yes or no with a sign of her head.

William burst suddenly into the room.

The countess seemed to have gone mad with joy. She laughed, she wept, embraced him, caressed him and then began embracing him again. It seemed as though William would never finish kissing her.

"The contact of those lips ought to bring my heart to life again! Call me your son! Call me your son!"

"My son, my dear, dear son!" repeated the countess. Remorse, repentance and joy gave to her utterance a divine tenderness.

William seemed to have lost his senses; he tore himself from his mother's arms and laid one hand upon her brow in order to make her raise her face; he wanted to study it well, and absorb all the tenderness glowing in those eyes. "Put your hands here, both of them, over my heart! Press them close! Closer still!"

But alas no, that terrible iciness refused to melt. His heart was dead, and forever! Not a throb! Not the least flutter of emotion! He might have been kissing a statue! It was infamous! A curse upon the science that had rendered him so vile!

VI

The morning after, without saying anything to his friends, William Usinger took the road which led to Doctor Cymbalus's little villa.

It was a holiday. Gay companies of men and women scattered over the meadows that lay on one side of the road were chatting merrily or dancing to the sound of violin and viol. Usinger stopped to watch these joyous people, but he understood nothing of their music or their songs. Those smiling countenances seemed to him as though deliberately intended to scorn and deride him.

Doctor Cymbalus received him with his wonted cordiality.

William explained to him what he had been enduring.

"I did not deceive you, my son!" the doctor answered, becoming sad and meditative. "Perhaps it would have been better if I had allowed you to accomplish your desperate purpose! But do not think on this account that I was induced by a scientist's vanity to try experiments with my discovery. You would do wrong to the heart of an honest man that science has taught to throb in sympathy for every creature that suffers. I was misled by a false hope: I dared to hope that Nature would not be inexorable. You were so young! You had suffered so deeply! But Nature does not change her inevitable laws."

"Good-by, doctor," said William.

"Keep up your courage, keep up your courage!"

"I will keep up my courage."

From the window of his study, Doctor Cymbalus watched the young man slowly departing with bowed head. He saw him pause in order to intrust something to his man-servant, then disappear across the adjoining grounds behind a thick clump of bushes.

There followed the report of a pistol.

The doctor made what haste he could, accompanied by his man, toward the point at which Usinger had passed from sight.

William lay stretched upon the ground in the midst of a pool of blood, his breast shattered by a terrible wound.

When the servant delivered to the doctor the note intrusted to him a few moments earlier, the aged scientist opened it in a terror of emotion, with tears in his eyes. It contained these few brief words:

I leave all my possessions to Doctor Franz Cymbalus, and to my friend, Hermann Strauss, in order that they may found a free school in which to teach mankind how to love!

Some Ancient Carols

(*The first Carols were Latin canticles, in praise of the infant Christ and the Virgin Mother. The French term for Christmas, Noël [through the Latin natalis, natal] became a dominant feature in English Carols after the Norman Conquest; and we find carols in Norman French, some in Latin, and others in English with Latin refrain. Some of the most colourful are naturally those in which the idea became vivid and took shape in the common mind, and are expressed in the homely speech, like the naïf song below telling of the "serpent's knee." Brand and Hone did much a century ago to start the idea of preserving these characteristic old songs of Christmastide; and there have since been elaborate volumes in which words and music were collected, and ancient mss. facsimiled. We give one specimen of the old musical notation in which a double line of letters took the place of the notes of treble and bass, h, g, f being the opening notes b, a, g.* H. W. L.)

Christmasse Kariles, if they be such as are fit for the time, and of holy and sober composures, and used with Christian sobriety and piety, they are not unlawfull, and may be profitable, if they be sung with grace in the heart. WARMSTRY: *Vindication of Christmas.*

As soon as the Morning of the *Nativity* appears, it is customary among the common People to sing a *Christmas-Carol*, which is a Song upon the Birth of our Saviour, and generally sung with some others, from the Nativity to the Twelfth-Day, the continuance of *Christmas*. It comes, they say, from *Cantare*, to sing, and *Rola*, which is an Interjection of Joy: for in ancient Times, the Burden of the Song, when Men were Merry, was *Rola, Rola.*

This kind of Songs is of an Ancient standing: they were sung early in the Church itself, in memory of the Nativity, as the many HYMNS for that Season manifestly declare: *Tertullian* says, it was customary among the Christians, at their Feasts, to bring those, who were able to sing, into the Midst, and make them sing a Song unto GOD; either out of the Holy Scripture, or of their own Composing and Invention. And as this was done at their Feasts, so no doubt it was observed at the great Feast of the Nativity; which Song, no Question of it, was to them, what the *Christmas-Carol* should be to us. In after Ages we have it also taken Notice of: For *Durand* tells us, That on the Day of the *Nativity*, it was usual for the Bishops of some Churches to sing among their Clergy, in the Episcopal House, which Song was undoubtedly a *Christmas-Carol*. . . .

Was this performed with that Reverence and Decency, which are due to a Song of this Nature, in Honour of the Nativity, and Glory to our Lord, it would be very commendable; but to sing it, as is generally done, in the midst of *Rioting and Chambering*, and *Wantonness*, is no Honour, but Disgrace; no Glory, but an Affront to that Holy Season, a Scandal to Religion, and a Sin against Christ. **Henry Bourne.**

Brynging in the Bore's Head

Apri deſero Reddens laudes Domino

The Bore's Heade in hande bring I,
With garlandes gay and rosemary,
I pray you all synge merely,
Qui estis in convivio.

The Bore's Head, I understande,
Is the chief servyce in this lande:
Loke wherever it be fande,
Servite in Cantico.

Be gladde, Lordes, both mon and lasse,
For this both ordayned our stewarde
To chere you all this Christmasse,
The Bore's Head with mustarde.

Christmasse Carolles, imprinted by
Wynkyn de Worde. 1521.

The Star Song

The flourish of Musick; then followed the Song:

Tell us, thou cleere and heavenly Tongue,
Where is the Babe but lately sprung?
Lies He the Lillie-banks among?

Or say, if this new Birth of ours
Sleep, laid within some Ark of Flowers,
Spangled with deaw-light; thou canst cleere
All doubts, and manifest the where.

Declare to us, bright Star, if we shall seek
Him in the Morning's blushing cheek,
Or search the beds of Spices through,
To find him out?

A Caroll to the King; Sung at White-Hall, (Robert Herrick.)

I Saw a Sweet and Silly Sight

I saw a sweet (and) silly[1] sight
A blissful bridge, a blossom bright
That mourning made and mirth among.
A maiden mother, meek and mild,
In cradle kept a knavë child
That softly slept; she sat and sang,
"Lullay, lullow, lully, lullay, lully, lully, lully, lully, lully,
Lullow, lully, lullay, baw, baw,
My bairn, sleep softly now."

[1] blessed

The Three Ships

I saw three ships come sailing in
On Christmas-day, on Christmas-day;
I saw three ships come sailing in
On Christmas-day in the morning.

And what was in those ships all three,
On Christmas-day, on Christmas-day?
And what was in those ships all three,
On Christmas-day in the morning?

Our Saviour Christ and his Lady,
On Christmas-Day, on Christmas-day:
Our Saviour Christ and his Lady,
On Christmas-day in the morning.

Pray whither sailed those ships all three,
On Christmas-day, on Christmas-day?
Pray whither sailed those ships all three,
On Christmas-day in the morning?

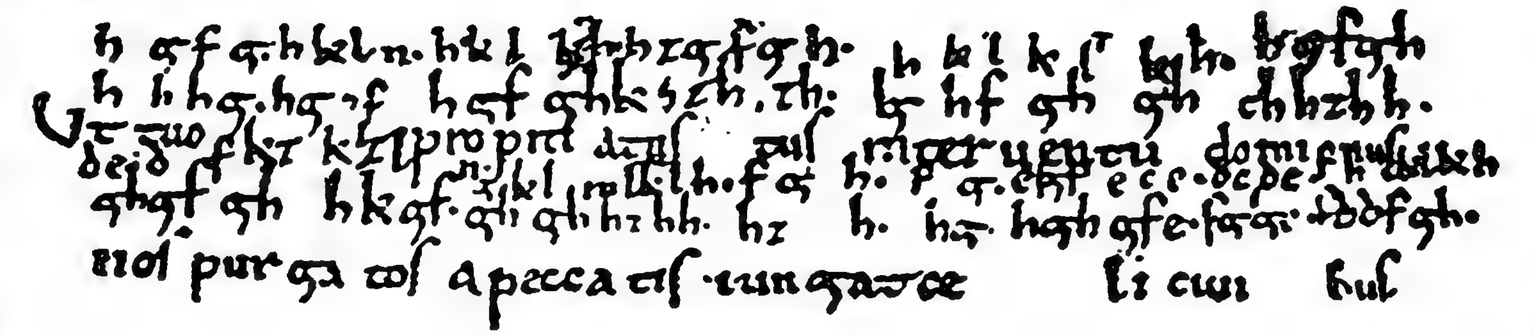
O they sailed into Bethlehem,
  On Christmas-day, on Christmas-day;
O they sailed into Bethlehem,
  On Christmas-day in the morning.

And all the bells on earth shall ring,
  On Christmas-day, on Christmas-day;
And all the bells on earth shall ring,
  On Christmas-day in the morning.

And all the angels in heaven shall sing,
  On Christmas-day, on Christmas-day;
And all the angels in heaven shall sing,
  On Christmas-day in the morning.

And all the souls on earth shall sing,
  On Christmas-day, on Christmas-day,
And all the souls on earth shall sing,
  On Christmas-day in the morning.

Then let us all rejoice amain,
  On Christmas-day, on Christmas-day;
Then let us all rejoice amain,
  On Christmas-day in the morning. *Traditional.*

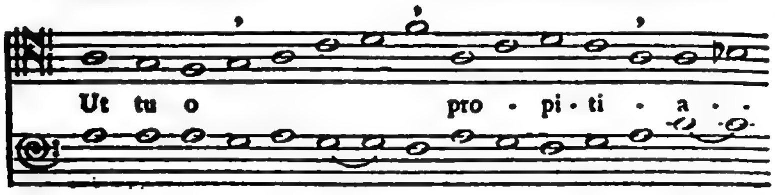


FACSIMILE OF A MS. CAROL, PROBABLY OF THE TENTH CENTURY

This earliest known English Carol, believed to have been written in a Benedictine Monastery in Cornwall, is in the old alphabetical notation—two lines indicating the musical notes, the third giving the words.

h g f
h h h
Ut tuo

A CORNISH CAROL. *MS. Bodleian, 572, fol. 50.*



THE CHERRY TREE

Joseph was an old man,
And an old man was he,
When he wedded Mary
In the land of Galilee.

Joseph and Mary walked
Through an orchard good,
Where was cherries and berries
So red as any blood.

Joseph and Mary walked
Through an orchard green,
Where was cherries and berries
As thick as might be seen.

O then bespoke Mary,
So meek and so mild,
"Pluck me one cherry, Joseph,
For I am with child."

O then bespoke Joseph,
With words most unkind,
"Let him pluck thee a cherry
That brought thee with child."

O then bespoke the Babe
Within His mother's womb—
"Bow down then the tallest tree
For my mother to have some."

Then bowed down the highest tree,
Unto His mother's hand.
Then she cried, "See, Joseph,
I have cherries at command."

O then bespake Joseph—
"I have done Mary wrong;
But cheer up, my dearest,
And be not cast down.

"O eat your cherries, Mary,
O eat your cherries now,
O eat your cherries, Mary,
That grow upon the bough."

Then Mary plucked a cherry,
As red as the blood;
Then Mary went home
With her heavy load.

A TALE OF A MERRY CHRISTMAS CARROLL, SUNG BY WOMEN

There was sometime an olde Knight, who being disposed to make himselfe merry in a Christmas time, sent for many of his Tenants and poor neighbours, with their wiues, to dinner; when hauing made meat to be set on the table, (he) would suffer no man to drinke till hee that was master ouer his wife should sing a Carroll to excuse all the company. Great nicenesse there was who should be the Musician, now the Cuckow time was so farre off. Yet with much adoe, looking one upon another, after a dry hemme or two, a dreaming companion drew out as much as hee durst towards an ill-fashioned ditty. When hauing made an end, to the great comfort of the beholders, at last it came to the womens table, where likewise commaundment was giuen that there should no drinke be touched till shee that was master ouer her husband had sung a Christmas Carroll; whereupon they fell all to such a singing, that there was neuer heard such a catterwalling piece of musike. Whereat the knight laughed so hartily, that it did him halfe as much good as a corner of his Christmas pye. *Pasquil's Jests*, Edited by W. CAREW HAZLITT.

AS DEW IN APRIL

I sing of a maiden
That is makeless,[1]
King of all kings
To her Son she ches.[2]

He came all so still
Where His mother was,
As dew in April
That falleth on the grass.

He came all so still
To His mother's bower,
As dew in April
That falleth on the flower.

He came all so still
Where His mother lay,
As dew in April
That falleth on the spray.

Mother and maiden
Was never none but she;
Well may such a lady
Godës mother be.

FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

---

[1] Matchless.

[2] Chose.

A FIFTEENTH CENTURY CARROLL

Mother, white as lily flower,
Your lulling lesseth my languor.

As I rose up in a morning,
My thought was on a maid(en)ying,
That sang asleep with her lulling,
Her sweet Son, our Saviour.

As she Him held (all) in her lap,
He took her lovely by the pap,
And thereof sweetly He took a nap,[1]
And sucked His fill of the liquor.

To His mother gan He say:
"For this milk me mustë die,
It is my kind therewith to play,
My sweet mother, *par amour*."[2]

The maiden freely gan to sing,
And in her song she made mourning,
How He that is our heaven(ly) King
Should shed His blood with great dolour.

"Mother, thy weeping grieveth me sore,
Save I would die, thou hadst been lore;[3]
So away, mother, and weep no more;
Thy lulling lesseth my languor."

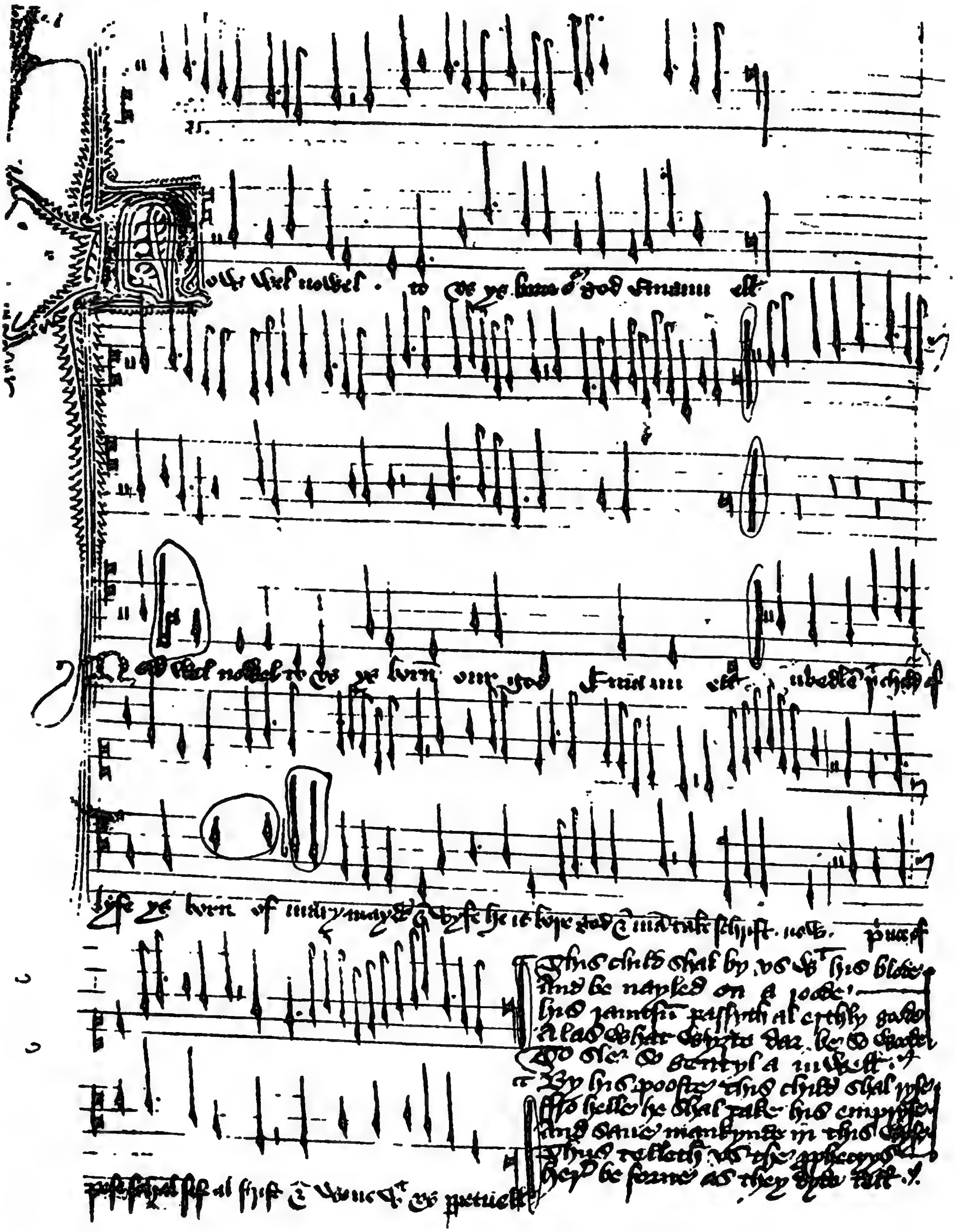
Such mourning as the maiden made,
I cannot tell it in this hour;
Therefore be merry and glad,
And make us merry for our Saviour.

---

[1] draught

[2] For love's sake

[3] Lost



A Two- and Three-Part Carol "Now wel Nowel". About 1450.

FROM "DIVES AND LAZARUS"

[*The author had doubtless seen an old woodcut of Lazarus seated on Abraham's lap.*]

As it fell out, upon a day,
Rich Dives sicken'd and died,
There came two serpents out of hell,
His soul therein to guide.

Rise up, rise up, brother Dives,
And come along with me,
For you've a place provided in hell,
To sit upon a serpent's knee.

LULLAY, MINE LIKING

Lullay, mine Liking, my dear Son, mine Sweeting,
Lullay, my dear Heart, mine own dear Darling.

I saw a fair maiden sit and sing,
She lulled a little child, a sweet lording:
Lullay, mine Liking, my dear Son, mine Sweeting,
Lullay, my dear Heart, mine own dear Darling.

That very lord is He that made all things.
Of all lords He is Lord (and) King of all kings.
Lullay, mine Liking, my dear Son, mine Sweeting.
Lullay, my dear Heart, mine own dear Darling.

There was mickle melody at that Childes birth,
All that were in heaven's bliss, they made mickle mirth.
Lullay, mine Liking, my dear Son, mine Sweeting,
Lullay, my dear Heart, mine own dear Darling.

Angels bright they sang that night and saiden to that Child,
"Blessed be Thou, and so be she that is both meek and mild."
Lullay, mine Liking, my dear Son, mine Sweeting,
Lullay, my dear Heart, mine own dear Darling.

Pray we now to that Child, and to His mother dear,
Grant them His blessing that now maken cheer.
Lullay, mine Liking, my dear Son, mine Sweeting,
Lullay, my dear Heart, mine own dear Darling. FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

SAINT STEPHEN WAS A CLERK

Saint Stephen was a clerk in King Herod's hall,
And served him of bread and cloth, as ever king befall.

Stephen out of kitchen came with boar's head in (his) hand,
He saw a star (that) was fair and bright over Bethlehem stand.

He cast adown the boar's head and went into the hall:
"I forsake thee, King Herod, and thy workës all."

"I forsake thee, King Herod, and thy workës all;
There is a child in Bethlehem born is better than we all."

"What aileth thee, Stephen, what is thee befall?
Lacketh thee either meat or drink in King Herod's hall?"

"Lacketh me neither meat nor drink in King Herod's hall,
There is a child in Bethlehem born is better than we all."

"What aileth thee, Stephen, art thou mad, or thou ginnest to brede?[1]
Lacketh thee either gold or fee or any richë weed?"

"Lacketh me neither gold nor fee, nor no richë weed,
There is a child in Bethlehem born shall help us at our need."

"That is all so sooth, Stephen, all so sooth ywis,
As this capon crow (it) shall, that lieth here in my dish."

That word was not so soonë said, that word in that hall,
The capon crew, *Christus natus est*, among the lordës all

"Riseth up my tormentors, by twos and all by one,
And leadeth Stephen out of this town, and stoneth him with stone."

Took (they then) Stephen and stoned him in the way,
Therefore is his even on Christës own day. FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

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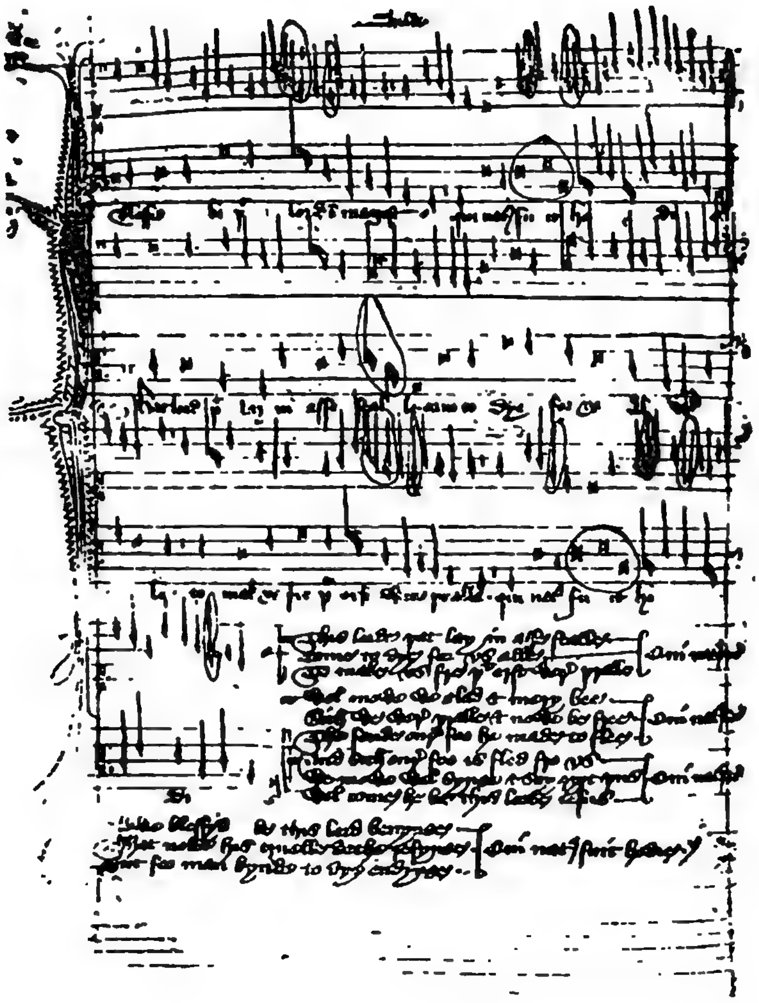
[1] Rave



A TWO-PART ENGLISH-LATIN CAROL

Composed by one "Childe"
About 1450 A. D.

"BRING US IN GOOD ALE"

Bring us in good ale, and bring us in good ale;
For our Blessed Lady's sake, bring us in good ale.
Bring us in no brown bread, for that is made of bran,
Nor bring us in no white bread, for therein is no game;
But bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no beef, for there is many bones,
But bring us in good ale, for that goes down at once;
And bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no bacon, for that is passing fat,
But bring us in good ale, and give us enough of that;
And bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no mutton, for that is often lean,
Nor bring us in no tripes, for they be seldom clean;
But bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no eggs, for there are many shells,
But bring us in good ale, and give us nothing else;
And bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no butter, for therein are many hairs;
Nor bring us in no pig's flesh, for that will make us boars;
But bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no puddings, for therein is all God's good;
Nor bring us in no venison, for that is not for our blood;
But bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no capon's flesh, for that is often dear;
Nor bring us in no duck's flesh, for they slobber in the mere;
But bring us in good ale. (*Time of Henry VI.*)

THE DAY OF THE NATIVITY

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
Tidings good I think to tell.
The boar's head that we bring here,
Betokeneth a Prince withouten peer,
Is born this day to buy us dear,
Nowell.

A boar is a sovereign beast,
And acceptable in every feast;
So might thy Lord be to most and least,
Nowell.

The boar's head we bring with song,
In worship of Him that thus sprung
Of a virgin to redress all wrong,
Nowell. SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

THE JOLLY SHEPHERD WAT

The shepherd upon a hill he sat,
He had on him his tabard[1] and his hat,
His tar-box, his pipe and his flagat;[2]
His name was called jolly, jolly Wat;
For he was a good herd's boy,
Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.
Can I not sing but hoy,
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy.

The shepherd upon a hill was laid,
His dog to his girdle was tied;
He had not slept but a little braid,[3]
But "*Gloria in excelsis*" was to him said.
Ut hoy! &c.

The shepherd on a hill he stood,
Round about him his sheep they yode;[4]
He put his hand under his hood,
He saw a star as red as blood.
Ut hoy! &c.

"Now farewell Mall and also Will,
For my love, go ye all still
Unto[5] I come again you till,[6]
And evermore, Will, ring well thy bell."
Ut hoy! &c.

"Now must I go where Christ was born;
Farewell! I come again to-morn.
Dog, keep well my sheep from the corn,
And warn well Warrock when I blow my horn."
Ut hoy! &c.

Can I not sing but hoy ,
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy.
When Wat to Bethlehem comë was,
He sweat; he had gone faster than a pace;
He found Jesus in a simple place,
Between an ox and an ass.
Ut hoy! &c.

The shepherd said anon right:
"I will go see yon ferly[7] sight,
Whereas the angel singeth on height,
And the star that shineth so bright."
Ut hoy! &c.

"Jesu! I offer to Thee here my pipe,
My scrip, my tar-box, and my skirt;
Home to my fellows now will I skip,
And also look unto my sheep."
Ut hoy! &c.

"Now farewell, my own herdsman Wat!"
"Yea, for God, Lady, even so I hight;[8]
Lull well Jesu in thy lap,
And farewell, Joseph, with thy round cape!"
Ut hoy! &c.

"Now may I well both hope and sing,
For I have been at Christ's bearing;
Home to my fellows now will I fling;
Christ of heaven to His bliss us bring!"
Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.
Can I not sing but hoy,
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy.

---

[1] short coat. [2] bottle. [3] time. [4] went. [5] Until. [6] to. [7] strange. [8] am called.

Behold My Children!

By VERNER VON HEIDENSTAM

Verner von Heidenstam.

Translated by Charles Wharton Stork

CORPORAL ANDERS GROBERG stood with his canteen on Saracen's Heath. Around him reeled and marched the last band of fleeing Swedes and Zaporogeans, and on wagons lay those who had been wounded at Poltava. The whole night and morning Anders Groberg had endured thirst so as to spare the last drops of water to the utmost, and the torture had now become overpowering. But in the very moment he lifted the canteen to his lips, he lowered it again.

"My God, my God!" he stammered, "why should I alone drink, when all the others are thirsting? If Thou hast led us forth into the wilderness and the steppes, it is that Thou shouldst sometime be able to say: 'From your poverty-stricken country of snow I let you go forth into the world with musket on shoulder to be hailed as heroes and conquerors, but when I read your hearts and saw that they remained pure, that ye were my children, then I tore your clothes in pieces and set crutches in your hands and wooden legs under your bodies, so that ye should no more hanker after domination over men, but should be gathered among my saints. Such greatness did I grant unto you.'"

Anders Groberg stood awhile longer with the canteen before him. Then he went on, and handed it to the king, who lay in burning fever among the sacks of hay on his wagon. The king's lips adhered to his teeth; they split and bled when he opened them.

"No, no," he whispered, "give the water to the wounded! I have just had a glass."

Anders Groberg knew well that the king had had no water. He himself was the only man who had taken thought for the morrow and saved it up, and neither spring nor bog had they found for many a mile. But now, as he turned away from the wagon, weakness and temptation once more came over him. He hung the canteen back at his side and continued to march and march without handing it to the wounded. He squeezed the stopper and strove in his soul, but every time he raised the canteen to his mouth, he let it fall again and had not the heart to drink of the water.

"Perhaps," he thought, "I might refresh myself with a clearer conscience, if as an offset I should humiliate myself in something else."

At noon, when the sun burned most hotly, he saw a gray-haired subaltern who went almost naked with unbandaged wounds on his shoulder. Thereupon he tore up his shirt, bound the other's wounds, and gave him his coat; but as soon as he shut his hand on his canteen again, his unrest of conscience woke anew. Then he gave his boots to a sick driver lad, who limped along with bare and bleeding feet, but when he still could not swallow the water with an easy mind in the midst of all the other thirsty men, he became embittered and hard. He pointed with derisive curses at the money-barrels which, full of gold and silver, clattered as they were taken along on two of the wagons, but which could not provide the unfortunate soldiers with a spoonful of brackish bog-water.

"Whip the horses!" he shouted, "whip the horses, so that the money-barrels shall not be left behind! Whip the men, too!"

The soldiers answered nothing, because now they recognized him again as he used to be formerly, when in the years of success he had gone in front of the line, bitter and abusive. They did not notice that he had hardly heard his own voice before he bent his head and began again to cudgel his brains and whisper to himself.

"Must I then of necessity offer up just the one thing that has now any worth for me?" he thought. "Haha! May we also some day roll the money-barrels on the grass and nevermore touch them with our fingers! My God, my God! Once at Veperik I heard the dying soldier Bengt Geting speak with envy of the fallen who had received a clean white shirt. My longing dares not rise so high. I desire so little . . . ah, only this, not to be left lying behind the others on the heath, only to be laid in the ground, to have earth and grass over me—and a couple of words on the muster-roll. Now it will stand: Anders Groberg, his fate unknown."

Toward dusk a halt was made to bury those who had died during the day, and a couple of Zaporogeans had already stuck their spades in the ground. In the reedy grass grew a few low bushes with cherries which, meanwhile, officers and soldiers picked and divided among them as a bounty bestowed from God's own hands. Anders Groberg slunk behind the bushes to drink the water unseen by the others. But just then the trumpets began to blow as a sign that the pursuing Russians had again become visible against the heaven on the farthest waves of the parched desert of grass.

Anders Groberg opened the tin stopper, but the longer he inhaled the moist smell, the harder beat his heart, and in the nearest wagon the dying Börje Köve, a soldier in charge of the silver, raised himself and stared at him.

Anders Groberg tried to meet his look, but could not, and yet again he pushed the draught of refreshment from him.

"Blessed are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness," he said.

Like an acolyte who gives the sacrament, he bore the canteen in front of him and held it to the mouth of the soldier, and the dying man drank the water to the last drop.

Anders Groberg held on tight to the tailboard, but when the wheel rolled on again, his hand slipped off, and he tottered to his knees on the grass.

"There is no place for me on the wagons," he said, and pulled a spade to him. "Though I'm hardly thirty years old, I am as weary and infirm as a man of ninety. But leave me one of the spades, so that, if my strength stays by me, I may at least be able to open the earth and lay me down in my last abode. All my unrest has now fallen sweetly to sleep, and a voice calls at my ear: 'Behold my children!'"

Once more the soldiers around the shaking wagons began their wandering, and the trumpeters turned in the saddle. Flocks of storks with outspread wings hovered in the dusk over the darkening tracts, and out on the steppe Anders Groberg still knelt with the spade in his hands.

Since then no one has learned anything of his fate.

* * *

Meeting At Night

By ROBERT BROWNING

THE gray sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spirt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, through its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each!

The Beggar Boy at Christ's Christmas Tree

By FEODOR M. DOSTOIEVSKY

Translated by Zénaïde A. Ragozin

I AM a novelist, and I believe I have invented a story. Why do I say "I believe," when I know for certain that I did invent it? But somehow I cannot rid myself of the idea that this really happened somewhere, and, of all days, on a Christmas eve, in a big, big city, on a terribly cold day. Methinks I can see the boy, a very small boy, some six years old, or even less. This boy awoke one morning in a cold and humid basement. He had on some kind of a light, loose coat, and shivered. His breath came out of his mouth as white steam, and he, sitting on the corner of a wooden chest, found amusement in letting out this steam and watching it disperse. But he was very hungry. Several times, from earliest morning, he had gone up to the bunk, on which, lying on a mat not much thicker than a pancake, with some kind of a bundle in place of a pillow, reposed his sick mother. How did she get here? Probably came with her boy from some provincial town and had fallen suddenly ill. The landlady, who let "corners" to lodgers, had been taken to the police station two days before; the lodgers had dispersed, and the only one left had been lying dead drunk for the last twenty-four hours, in anticipation of the holiday. In another corner, moaning with rheumatism, lay an old woman of eighty, who at some time had been a children's nurse, and now was dying, solitary and forlorn, groaning and grumbling at the boy, so that he became afraid of going near her corner. He had found water to drink somewhere in the hall, but not a crust could he hunt up anywhere, and he tried for about the tenth time to rouse his mother. He began at last to feel queer in the dark; the evening had set in long ago, but no one got a light. He felt his mother's face, and wondered why she did not move at all and was as cold as the wall. But then it was very cold there, he thought. He stood awhile, forgetting to take his hand from the dead woman's shoulder, then breathed on his small fingers to warm them, and, following a sudden impulse, fumbled on the bunk for his shabby cap, and softly groped his way out into the street. He would have gone sooner, but was scared of the big dog upstairs, which had been howling all day outside a neighbour's door. Now the dog was gone, and he found himself in the street.

My, what a city! Never had he seen anything like it. There, where he had come from, the nights were pitch dark: just one lamp for a whole street. The small, low, wooden houses had shutters; the streets were deserted the moment twilight set in. Not a soul; people shut themselves up in the houses, and only bands of dogs—hundreds, thousands of them—howled and barked all night long. But he had been warm there and had had enough to eat, while here . . . Lord! if only he *could* get something to eat! And what noise and thunder! What dazzling light! What crowds of people! . . . horses, carriages. . . . And the cold, the cold! Frozen steam rises in clouds from the hard-driven horses, out of their hot-breathing mouths and nostrils; through the soft snow is heard the clanking of their shoes against the pavement, and there is such a pushing, pressing. . . . And, oh, Lord! he does so much want to eat, just a little something! . . . And his tiny fingers all at once begin to hurt him so. A police officer passed him, and turned away, so as not to have to notice the boy.

And now—another street. Such a wide one! Here they will surely trample him down! How all these people run, and drive, and shout! And the light—so much light! And, oh! what is this? A window. Such a big glass! And behind the glass—a room. And in the room—a tree, so tall—right up to the ceiling. It is a Christmas tree, and on it such a lot of little flames, of gilt paper and apples, and all around it are little dolls, little horses; and all about the room children—such clean, dressed-up children—running, jumping, laughing, and eating and drinking things. Now one little girl is starting to dance with a little boy—such a pretty little girl! And there goes music, you can hear it through the glass. And as the little boy in the street looks on, he too laughs; yet the toes on his feet are also beginning to ache, and as to his fingers, they are quite red; he cannot bend them, and it hurts to move them. Suddenly he remembered that they all hurt so, and he began to cry, and ran farther on. But there again is a glass window, and behind it a room, and in the room are trees; but there are tables, and on the tables, cakes—all sorts of them—red, yellow, with almonds; and four richly dressed ladies sit there and give the cakes away to all comers; and every minute or so the door opens and people go in and come out. The little boy stole up to that door, opened it quickly and went in. Oh, dear, how they shouted and waved their hands at him! One of the ladies hastily went up to him, slipped a copper coin into his hand, and herself opened the door for him. How frightened he was! And he dropped the coin, which rolled, jingling, down the steps: he could not bend his stiff, red fingers so as to hold it. He ran as fast as he could run, with no idea of where he was running to. He felt like crying, but he was too frightened, and could only run, and, as he ran, he breathed on his hands to warm them. He felt so strange, so alone and forlorn. Suddenly . . . oh, Lord, what is this now? An admiring crowd stands before a window, on which, behind the glass, are three dolls, dressed up in red and green gowns, looking just as if they were alive! An old man sits there too, playing on something which looks like a very large fiddle, and two more stand by his side and play on small fiddles; they look at each other and nod their heads in time and their lips move; they are speaking but one cannot hear them, because of the glass between. The boy thought at first they really were alive, and when he was quite sure they were dolls, he laughed aloud. He never had seen such dolls and never imagined there could be such! He wanted to cry, yet had to laugh, —the dolls were so very, very funny! At this moment he felt that some one took hold of him from behind: a wicked, big boy who stood next to him struck him heavily on the head with his fist, snatched away his cap and kicked him from below. The little fellow rolled over on the ground; people shouted and scolded; numb with fright, he somehow picked himself up and ran, ran madly on, till, half unconsciously, he skipped into a gateway and found himself in a big yard, where he cowered down behind a stack of wood; he felt safe there, it was dark, and "they" would not find him.

He sat still and made himself quite small, but could not get his breath with fright. Suddenly—so suddenly! he felt quite comfortable; hands and feet ceased to hurt, and he felt as warm as if he were sitting by the stove. He straightened with a start; why, he had all but fallen asleep! How nice it would be to go to sleep here. "I will rest here awhile, and go again to look at the dolls," thought the boy, and smiled to himself, adding: "Just as if they were alive." Then it seemed to him that his mother was singing for him as she used to. "Mother, I am sleeping; it is so nice to sleep here!"

"Come to me; come to my Christmas tree, boy!" a gentle voice whispered quite near.

He thought at first it was his mother; but it was not. Who is it, then, that calls him? He cannot see; but some one is bending over him; an arm enfolds him in the dark. He puts out his hand . . . and lo! what brightness! what a flood of light! . . . And oh! what a tree! But no, it is not a tree; he has never seen such trees. . . . *Where* is he, anyhow? Light and radiance everywhere, and so many, many little dolls all around him. . . . But no! they are not dolls; these are all little boys and little girls, so pretty and bright, some dancing, some flying, and they all press and crowd around him and kiss him, and, as he gazes, his mother is there too, and looks at him, laughing happily.

"Mamma, Mamma! Oh, how nice it is here!" he exclaims, and again kisses the children all round, and wants to tell them quickly all about the dolls behind the glass; but asks them instead: "Who are you, little boys? Who are you, little girls?" And laughs, and loves them all.

"This is Christ's Christmas tree," they answer him. "On this day Christ always has a tree for such little children as have no tree of their own down there . . ."

And he learned that these boys and girls were all children like himself, but some had frozen to death in the baskets in which they had been exposed on backstairs, at the doors of government officials; others had perished in wretched hovels, whither they had been sent from the Foundlings' Hospital; others again had died of starvation at their mother's dried-up breasts, or had been suffocated in the foul air of third-class railroad cars. And now, here they all were angels, Christ's guests, and He Himself was in their midst, stretching out His hands to them, blessing them and their poor, sinful mothers. And these children's mothers also stand there, a little apart, weeping; each one knows her own little boy or little girl; and the children fly up to them, and kiss them, and wipe their tears with their tiny hands, and beg them not to weep, for they, the children, are so happy here. . . .

And down below, on that Christmas morning, there was found in a yard the body of a small boy who had run in from the street, hidden behind a stack of wood, and there frozen to death. His mother, too, was found. She had died before him; they had met in God's heaven. . . .

What in the world made me invent such a story, and tell it, too, in this sober diary of mine, which should treat only of real things and current events? . . . But then, you see, I cannot get rid of the idea that all this may have really happened—I mean what took place in the basement and behind the firewood. As to Christ's Christmas tree and what went on there, I can't tell you for sure whether or not it may have really happened. But I am a novelist, and it is a novelist's business to invent.

Growing Old

By MATTHEW ARNOLD

1

What is it to grow old?
Is it to lose the glory of the form,
The lustre of the eye?
Is it for beauty to forgo her wreath?
Yes, but not this alone.

2

Is it to feel our strength—
Not our bloom only, but our strength—decay?
Is it to feel each limb
Grow stiffer, every function less exact,
Each nerve more loosely strung?

3

Yes, this, and more; but not,
Ah! 'tis not what in youth we dreamed 'twould be.
'Tis not to have our life
Mellow'd and soften'd as with sunset-glow,
A golden day's decline.

4

'Tis not to see the world
As from a height, with rapt prophetic eyes,
And heart profoundly stirr'd;
And weep, and feel the fulness of the past,
The years that are no more.

5

It is to spend long days
And not once feel that we were ever young;
It is to add, immured
In the hot prison of the present, month
To month with weary pain.

6

It is to suffer this
And feel but half, and feebly, what we feel.
Deep in our hidden heart
Festers the dull remembrance of a change,
But no emotion—none.

7

It is—last stage of all—
When we are frozen up within, and quite
The phantom of ourselves,
To hear the world applaud the hollow ghost,
Which blamed the living man.

The Scaler

By STEWART EDWARD WHITE

Stewart Edward White

ONCE Morrison & Daly, of Saginaw, but then lumbering at Beeson Lake, lent some money to a man named Crothers, taking in return a mortgage on what was known as the Crothers Tract of white pine. In due time, as Crothers did not liquidate, the firm became possessed of this tract. They hardly knew what to do with it.

The timber was situated some fifty miles from the railroad in a country that threw all sorts of difficulties across the logger's path, and had to be hauled from nine to fifteen miles to the river. Both Morrison and Daly groaned in spirit. Supplies would have to be toted in to last the entire winter, for when the snow came, communication over fifty miles of forest road would be as good as cut off. Whom could they trust among the lesser foremen of their woods force? Whom could they spare among the greater?

At this juncture they called to them Tim Shearer, their walking boss and the greatest riverman in the State.

"You'll have to 'job' her," said Tim, promptly.

"Who would be hired at any price to go up in that country on a ten-mile haul?" demanded Daly, skeptically.

"Jest one man," replied Tim, "an' I know where to find him."

He returned with an individual at the sight of whom the partners glanced toward each other in doubt and dismay. But there seemed no help for it. A contract was drawn up in which the firm agreed to pay six dollars a thousand, merchantable scale, for all saw-logs banked at a rollway to be situated a given number of miles from the forks of Cass Branch, while on his side James Bourke, better known as the Rough Red, agreed to put in at least three and one-half million feet. After the latter had scrawled his signature he lurched from the office, softly rubbing his hairy freckled hand where the pen had touched it.

"That means a crew of wild Irishmen," said Morrison.

"And *that* means they'll just slaughter the pine," added Daly. "They'll saw high and crooked, they'll chuck the tops—who are we going to send to scale for 'em?"

Morrison sighed. "I hate to do it: there's only Fitz can make it go."

So then they called to them another of their best men, named FitzPatrick, and sent him away alone to protect the firm's interests in the depths of the wilderness.

The Rough Red was a big broad-faced man with eyes far apart and a bushy red beard. He wore a dingy mackinaw coat, a dingy black-and-white checked-flannel shirt, dingy blue trousers, tucked into high socks and lumberman's rubbers. The only spot of colour in his costume was the flaming red sash of the *voyageur* which he passed twice around his waist. When at work his little wide eyes flickered with a baleful, wicked light, his huge voice bellowed through the woods in a torrent of imprecations and commands, his splendid muscles swelled visibly even under his loose blanket-coat as he wrenched suddenly and savagely at some man's stubborn cant-hook stock. A hint of reluctance or opposition brought his fist to the mark with irresistible impact. Then he would pluck his victim from the snow, and kick him to work with a savage jest that raised a laugh from everybody—excepting the object of it.

At night he stormed back through the forest at the head of his band, shrieking wild blasphemy at the silent night, irreverent, domineering, bold, with a certain tang of Irish good-nature that made him the beloved of Irishmen. And at the trail's end the unkempt, ribald crew swarmed their dark and dirty camp as a band of pirates a galleon.

In the work was little system, but much

efficacy. The men gambled, drank, fought, without a word of protest from their leader. With an ordinary crew such performances would have meant slight accomplishment, but these wild Irishmen, with their bloodshot eyes, their ready jests, their equally ready fists, plunged into the business of banking logs with all the abandon of a carouse—and the work was done.

Law in that wilderness was not, saving that which the Rough Red chose to administer. Except in one instance, penalty more severe than a beating there was none, for the men could not equal their leader in breaking the greater and lesser laws of morality. The one instance was that of young Barney Mallan, who, while drunk, mishandled a horse so severely as to lame it. Him the Rough Red called to formal account.

"Don't ye know that horses can't be had?" he demanded, singularly enough without an oath. "Come here."

The man approached. With a single powerful blow of a starting-bar the Rough Red broke one of the bones of his tibia.

"Try th' lameness yerself," said the Rough Red, grimly. He glared about through the dimness at his silent men, then stalked through the door into the cook-camp. Had he killed Barney Mallan outright, it would have been the same. No one in the towns would have been a word the wiser.

On Thanksgiving Day the entire place went on a prolonged drunk. The Rough Red distinguished himself by rolling the round stove through the door into the snow. He was badly burned in accomplishing this delicate jest, but minded the smart no more then he did the admiring cheers of his maudlin but emulative mates. FitzPatrick extinguished a dozen little fires that the coals had started, shifted the intoxicated Mallan's leg out of the danger of someone's falling on it, and departed from that roaring hell-hole to the fringe of the solemn forest. And this brings us to FitzPatrick.

FitzPatrick was a tall, slow man, with a face built square. The lines of his brows, his mouth, and his jaw ran straight across; those of his temples, cheeks, and nose straight up and down. His eye was very quiet and his speech rare. When he did talk, it was with deliberation. For days, sometimes, he would ejaculate nothing but monosyllables, looking steadily on the things about him.

He had walked in ahead of the tote-team late one evening in the autumn, after the Rough Red and his devils had been at work a fortnight. The camp consisted quite simply of three buildings, which might have been identified as a cook-camp, a sleeping-camp, and a stable. FitzPatrick entered the sleeping-camp, stood his slender scaling-rule in the corner, and peered about him through the dusk of a single lamp.

He saw a round stove in the center, a littered and dirty floor, bunks filled with horrible straw and worse blankets jumbled here and there, old and dirty clothes drying fetidly. He saw an unkempt row of hard-faced men along the deacon-seat, reckless in bearing, with the light of the dare-devil in their eyes.

"Where is the boss?" asked FitzPatrick, steadily.

The Rough Red lurched his huge form toward the intruder.

"I am your scaler," explained the latter. "Where is the office?"

"You can have the bunk beyond," indicated the Rough Red, surlily.

"You have no office then?"

"What's good enough fer th' men is good enough for a boss; and what's good enough fer th' boss is good enough fer any blank blanked scaler."

"It is not good enough for this one," replied FitzPatrick, calmly. "I have no notion of sleepin' and workin' in no such noise an' dirt. I need an office to keep me books and th' van. Not a log do I scale for ye, Jimmy Bourke, till you give me a fit place to tally in."

And so it came about, though the struggle lasted three days. The Rough Red stormed restlessly between the woods and the camp, delivering tremendous broadsides of oaths and threats. FitzPatrick sat absolutely imperturbable on the deacon-seat, looking straight in front of him, his legs stretched comfortably aslant, one hand supporting the elbow of the other, which in turn held his short brier pipe.

"Good-mornin' to ye, Jimmy Bourke," said he each morning, and after that uttered no word until the evening, when it was, "Good-night to ye, Jimmy Bourke," with a final *rap*, *rap*, *rap* of his pipe.

The cook, a thin-faced, sly man, with a penchant for the *Police Gazette*, secretly admired him.

"Luk' out for th' Rough Red; he'll do ye!" he would whisper hoarsely when he passed the silent scaler.

But in the three days the Rough Red

put his men to work on a little cabin. FitzPatrick at once took his scaling-rule from the corner and set out into the forest.

His business was, by measuring the diameter of each log, to ascertain and tabulate the number of board feet put in by the contractor. On the basis of his single report James Bourke would be paid for the season's work. Inevitably he at once became James Bourke's natural enemy, and so of every man in the crew with the possible exception of the cook.

Suppose you log a knoll which your eye tells you must grow at least a half-million; suppose you work conscientiously for twelve days; suppose your average has always been between forty and fifty thousand a day. And then suppose the scaler's sheets credit you with only a little over the four hundred thousand! What would you think of it? Would you not be inclined to suspect that the scaler had cheated you in favour of his master? that you had been compelled by false figures to work a day or so for nothing?

FitzPatrick scaled honestly, for he was a just man, but exactitude and optimism of estimate never have approximated, and they did not in this case. The Rough Red grumbled, accused, swore, threatened. FitzPatrick smoked "Peerless," and said nothing. Still it was not pleasant for him, alone there in the dark wilderness fifty miles from the nearest settlement, without a human being with whom to exchange a friendly word.

The two men early came to a clash over the methods of cutting. The Rough Red and his crew cut anywhere, everywhere, anyhow. The easiest way was theirs. Small timber they skipped, large timber they sawed high, tops they left rather than trim them into logs. FitzPatrick would not have the pine "slaughtered."

"Ye'll bend your backs a little, Jimmy Bourke," said he, "and cut th' stumps lower to th' ground. There's a bunch of shingles at least in every stump ye've left. And you must saw straighter. And th' contract calls for eight inches and over; mind ye that. Don't go to skippin' th' little ones because they won't scale ye high. 'Tis in the contract so. And I won't have th' tops left. There's many a good log in them, an' ye trim them fair and clean."

"Go to hell, you —" shouted the Rough Red. "Where th' blazes did ye learn so much of loggin'? I log th' way me father logged, an' I'm not to be taught by a high-banker from th' Muskegon!"

Never would he acknowledge the wrong nor promise the improvement, but both were there, and both he and FitzPatrick knew it. The Rough Red chafed frightfully, but in a way his hands were tied. He could do nothing without the report; and it was too far out to send for another scaler, even if Daly would have given him one.

Finally in looking over a skidway he noticed that one log had not been blue-pencilled across the end. That meant that it had not been scaled; and that in turn meant that he, the Rough Red, would not be paid for his labour in cutting and banking it. At once he began to bellow through the woods.

"Hey! FitzPatrick! Come here, you blank-blanked-blank of a blank! Come here!"

The scaler swung leisurely down the travoy trail and fronted the other with level eyes.

"Well?" said he.

"Why ain't that log marked?"

"I culled it."

"Ain't it sound and good? Is there a mark on it? A streak of punk or rot? Ain't it good timber? What the hell's th' matter with it? You tried to do me out of that, you damn skunk."

A log is culled, or thrown out, when, for any reason, it will not make good timber.

"I'll tell you, Jimmy Bourke," replied FitzPatrick, calmly, "th' stick is sound and good, or was before your murderin' crew got hold of it, but if ye'll take a squint at the butt of it ye'll see that your gang has sawed her on a six-inch slant. They've wasted a good foot of th' log. I spoke of that afore; an' now I give ye warnin' that I cull every log, big or little, punk or sound, that ain't sawed square and true across th' butt."

"Th' log is sound and good, an' ye'll scale it, or I'll know th' reason why!"

"I will not," replied FitzPatrick.

The following day he culled a log in another and distant skidway whose butt showed a slant of a good six inches. The day following he culled another of the same sort on still another skidway. He examined it closely, then sought the Rough Red.

"It is useless, Jimmy Bourke," said he, "to be hauling of the same poor log from skidway to skidway. You can shift her to every travoy trail in th' Crother tract, but it will do ye little good. I'll cull it wherever I find it, and never will ye get th' scale of that log."

The Rough Red raised his hand, then dropped it again; whirled away with a curse; whirled back with another, and spat out:

"By God, FitzPatrick, ye go too far! Ye've hounded me and harried me through th' woods all th' year! By God, 'tis a good stick, an' ye shall scale it!"

"Yo' and yore Old Fellows is robbers alike!" cried one of the men.

FitzPatrick turned on his heel and resumed his work. The men ceased theirs and began to talk.

That night was Christmas Eve. After supper the Rough Red went directly from the cook-camp to the men's camp. FitzPatrick, sitting lonely in the little office, heard the sounds of debauch rising steadily like mysterious storm winds in distant pines. He shrugged his shoulders, and tallied his day's scaling, and turned into his bunk wearily, for of holidays there are none in the woods, save Sunday. About midnight someone came in. FitzPatrick, roused from his sleep by aimless blunderings, struck a light, and saw the cook looking uncertainly toward him through blood-clotted lashes. The man was partly drunk, partly hurt, but more frightened.

"They's too big fer me, too big fer me!" he repeated, thickly.

FitzPatrick kicked aside the blankets and set foot on the floor.

"Le' me stay," pleaded the cook, "I won't bother you; I won't even make a noise. I'm skeered!"

"Course you can stay," replied the scaler. "Come here."

He washed the man's forehead, and bound up the cut with surgeon's plaster from the van. The man fell silent, looking at him in wonderment for such kindness.

Four hours later, dimly, through the mist of his broken sleep, FitzPatrick heard the crew depart for the woods in the early dawn. On the crest of some higher waves of consciousness were borne to him drunken shouts, maudlin blasphemies. After a time he arose and demanded breakfast.

The cook, pale and nervous, served him. The man was excited, irresolute, eager to speak. Finally he dropped down on the bench opposite FitzPatrick, and began.

"Fitz," said he, "don't go in th' woods to-day. The men is fair wild wid th' drink, and th' Rough Red is beside hi'self. Las' night I heerd them. They are goin' to skid the butt log again, and they swear that if you cull it again, they will kill you. They mean it. That's all why they wint to th' woods this day."

FitzPatrick swallowed his coffee in silence. In silence he arose and slipped on his mackinaw blanket coat. In silence he thrust his beechwood tablets into his pocket, and picked his pliable scaler's rule from the corner.

"Where are ye goin'?" asked the cook, anxiously.

"I'm goin' to do th' work they pay me to do," answered FitzPatrick.

He took his way down the trail, his face set straight before him, the smoke of his breath streaming behind. The first skidway he scaled with care, laying his rule flat across the face of each log, entering the figures on his many-leaved tablets of beech, marking the timbers swiftly with his blue crayon.

The woods were empty. No ring of the axe, no shout of the driver, no fall of the tree broke the silence. FitzPatrick comprehended. He knew that at the next skidway the men were gathered, waiting to see what he would do; gathered openly at last in that final hostility which had been maturing all winter. He knew, besides, that most of them were partly drunk and wholly reckless, and that he was alone. Nevertheless, after finishing conscientiously skidway number one, he moved on to skidway number two.

There, as he had expected, the men were waiting in ominous silence, their eyes red with debauch and hate. FitzPatrick paid them no heed, but set about his business.

Methodically, deliberately, he did the work. Then, when the last pencil-mark had been made, and the tablets had been closed with a snap of finality, the Rough Red stepped forward.

"Ye have finished with this skidway?" asked the foreman in soft cat-tones.

"I have," answered FitzPatrick, briefly.

"Yo' have forgot to scale one stick."

"No."

"There is a stick still not marked."

"I culled it."

"Why?"

"It was not sawed straight."

FitzPatrick threw his head back proudly, answering his man at ease, as an accomplished swordsman. The Rough Red shifted his feet, almost awed in spite of himself. One after another the men dropped their eyes and stood ill at ease. The scaler turned away; his heel caught a root; he stumbled; instantly the pack was on him, for the power of his eye was broken.

Mad with rage they kicked and beat and tore at FitzPatrick's huddled form long after consciousness had left it. Then an owl hooted from the shadow of the wood, or a puff of wind swept by, or a fox barked, or some other little thing happened, so that in blind unreasoning panic they fled. The place was deserted, save for the dark figure against the red-and-white snow.

FitzPatrick regained his wits in pain, and so knew he was still on earth. Every movement cost him a moan, and some agency outside himself inflicted added torture. After a long time he knew it was the cook, who was kindly kneading his limbs and knuckling his hair. The man proved to be in a maze of wonderment over his patient's tenacity of life.

"I watched ye," he murmured soothingly, "I did not dare interfere. But I kem to yo' 's soon as I could. See, here's a fire that I built for ye, and some tea. Take a little. And no bones broke! True for ye, ye're a hearty man, and strong with th' big muscles on ye fit to fight th' Rough Red man to man. Get th' use of yere legs, darlint, an' I'll tak' ye to camp, for its fair drunk they are by now. Sure an' I tole ye they'd kill ye?"

"But they didn't," muttered FitzPatrick with a gleam of humour.

"Sure 'twas not their fault—nor yer own!"

Hours later, as it seemed, they moved slowly in the direction of camp. The cold had stiffened FitzPatrick's cuts and bruises. Every step shot a red wave of torture through his arteries to his brain. They came in sight of camp. It was silent. Both knew that the men had drunk themselves into a stupor.

"I'd like t' kill th' whole lay-out as she sleeps," snarled the cook, shaking his fist.

"So would I," replied FitzPatrick.

Then as they looked, a thin wreath of smoke curled from under the open doorway and spread lazily in the frosty air. Another followed; another; still another. The cabin was afire.

"They've kicked over th' stove again," said FitzPatrick, seating himself on a stump. His eyes blazed with wrath and bitterness.

"What yo' goin' to do?" asked the cook.

"Sit here," replied FitzPatrick, grimly.

The cook started forward.

"Stop!" shouted the scaler, fiercely; "if you move a step, I'll break your back!"

The cook stared at him through saucer eyes.

"But they'd be burnt alive!" he objected, wildly.

"They ought to be," snarled the scaler; "it ain't their fault I'm here to help them. 'Tis their own deed that I'm now lyin' beyant there in th' forest, unable to help myself. Do you understand? I'm yet out there in th' woods!"

"Ah, wirra, wirra!" wailed the cook, wringing his hands. "Th' poor lads!" He began to weep.

FitzPatrick stared straight in front of him for a moment. Then he struck his forehead, and with wonderful agility, considering the injuries he had but just received, tore down the hill in the direction of the smouldering cabin. The cook followed him joyfully. Together they put out the fire. The men snored like beasts, undisturbed by all the tumult.

"'Tis th' soft heart ye have after all, Fitz," said the cook, delightedly, as the two washed their hands in preparation for a lunch. "Ye could not bear t' see th' lads burn."

FitzPatrick glowered at him for an instant from beneath his square brows.

"They can go to hell for all of me," he answered, finally, "but my people want these logs put in this winter, an' there's nobody else to put them in."

Teach Me Your Mood

By RALPH WALDO EMERSON

TEACH me your mood, O patient stars!
Who climb each night the ancient sky,
Leaving on space no shade, no scars,
No trace of age, no fear to die.

Mr. Travers's First Hunt

By RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

Richard Harding Davis

YOUNG Travers, who had been engaged to a girl down on Long Island for the last three months, only met her father and brother a few weeks before the day set for the wedding. The brother is a master of hounds near Southampton, and shared the expense of importing a pack from England with Van Bibber. The father and son talked horse all day and until one in the morning; for they owned fast thoroughbreds, and entered them at the Sheepshead Bay and other race-tracks. Old Mr. Paddock, the father of the girl to whom Travers was engaged, had often said that when a young man asked him for his daughter's hand he would ask him in return, not if he had lived straight, but if he could ride straight. And on his answering this question in the affirmative depended his gaining her parent's consent. Travers had met Miss Paddock and her mother in Europe, while the men of the family were at home. He was invited to their place in the fall when the hunting season opened, and spent the evening most pleasantly and satisfactorily with his *fiancée* in a corner of the drawing-room. But as soon as the women had gone, young Paddock joined him and said, "You ride, of course?" Travers had never ridden; but he had been prompted how to answer by Miss Paddock, and so said there was nothing he liked better. As he expressed it, he would rather ride than sleep.

"That's good," said Paddock. "I'll give you a mount on Satan to-morrow morning at the meet. He is a bit nasty at the start of the season; and ever since he killed Wallis, the second groom, last year, none of us care much to ride him. But you can manage him, no doubt. He'll just carry your weight."

Mr. Travers dreamed that night of taking large, desperate leaps into space on a wild horse that snorted forth flames, and that rose at solid stone walls as though they were hayricks.

He was tempted to say he was ill in the morning—which was, considering his state of mind, more or less true—but concluded that, as he would have to ride sooner or later during his visit, and that if he did break his neck it would be in a good cause, he determined to do his best. He did not want to ride at all, for two excellent reasons—first, because he wanted to live for Miss Paddock's sake, and, second, because he wanted to live for his own.

The next morning was a most forbidding and doleful-looking morning, and young Travers had great hopes that the meet would be declared off; but, just as he lay in doubt, the servant knocked at his door with his riding things and his hot water.

He came downstairs looking very miserable indeed. Satan had been taken to the place where they were to meet, and Travers viewed him on his arrival there with a sickening sense of fear as he saw him pulling three grooms off their feet.

Travers decided that he would stay with his feet on solid earth just as long as he could, and when the hounds were thrown off and the rest had started at a gallop he waited, under the pretense of adjusting his gaiters, until they were all well away. Then he clenched his teeth, crammed his hat down over his ears, and scrambled up on to the saddle. His feet fell quite by accident into the stirrups, and the next instant he was off after the others, with an indistinct feeling that he was on a locomotive that was jumping the ties. Satan was in among and had passed the other horses in less than five minutes, and was so close on the hounds that the whippers-in gave a cry of warning. But Travers could as soon have pulled a boat back from going over the Niagara Falls as Satan, and it was only because the hounds were well ahead that saved them from having Satan ride them down. Travers had taken hold of the saddle with his left hand to keep himself down, and sawed and swayed on the reins with his right. He shut his eyes whenever Satan jumped, and never knew how he happened to stick on; but he did stick on, and was so far ahead that no one could see in the misty morning just how badly he rode. As it was, for daring and speed he led the field, and not even young Paddock was near him from the start. There was a broad stream in front of him, and a hill just on its other side. No one had ever tried to take this at a jump. It was considered more of a swim than anything else, and the hunters always crossed it by the bridge, toward the left. Travers saw the bridge and tried to jerk Satan's head in that direction; but Satan kept right on as straight as an express train over the prairie. Fences and trees and furrows passed by and under Travers like a panorama run by electricity, and he only breathed by accident. They went on at the stream and the hill beyond as though they were riding at a stretch of turf, and, though the whole field set up a shout of warning and dismay, Travers could only gasp and shut his eyes. He remembered the fate of the second groom and shivered. Then the horse rose like a rocket, lifting Travers so high in the air that he thought Satan would never come down again; but he did come down, with his feet bunched, on the opposite side of the stream. The next instant he was up and over the hill, and had stopped panting in the very center of the pack that were snarling and snapping around the fox. And then Travers showed that he was a thoroughbred, even though he could not ride, for he hastily fumbled for his cigar-case, and when the field came pounding up over the bridge and around the hill, they saw him seated nonchalantly on his saddle, puffing critically at a cigar and giving Satan patronizing pats on the head.

"My dear girl," said old Mr. Paddock to his daughter as they rode back, "if you love that young man of yours and want to keep him, make him promise to give up riding. A more reckless and more brilliant horseman I have never seen. He took that double jump at the gate and that stream like a centaur. But he will break his neck sooner or later, and he ought to be stopped." Young Paddock was so delighted with his prospective brother-in-law's great riding that that night in the smoking-room he made him a present of Satan before all the men.

"No," said Travers, gloomily, "I can't take him. Your sister has asked me to give up what is dearer to me than anything next to herself, and that is my riding. You see, she is absurdly anxious for my safety, and she has asked me to promise never to ride again, and I have given my word."

A chorus of sympathetic remonstrance rose from the men.

"Yes, I know," said Travers to her brother, "it is rough, but it just shows what sacrifices a man will make for the woman he loves."

The Possibility of Monogamy

IF a man exerts all his faculties in an endeavor to be loved, he is certainly animated by true passion—and nothing can resist the latter.

But to be passionate always, means to desire always. Can a man constantly desire his wife?

Yes.

It is as absurd to contend that it is impossible to love always the same woman as it would be to assert that a musician needs several violins in order to execute a piece of music and to create an entrancing melody.

Love is the poetry of the senses. Its fate is similar to the fate of all that is great in man and of all that proceeds from his mind. Either it is, or it is not, sublime. When it once really exists, it exists forever, and daily increases in strength. This is the love that the ancients considered the son of Heaven and of Earth. Honoré de Balzac.

The Honour of the Name

By ÉMILE GABORIAU

Being a Sequel to "Monsieur Lecoq"

CHAPTER XIV

IF MARTIAL had faithfully reported to Mlle. Blanche all that he heard in the Marquis de Courtornieu's cabinet, he would probably have astonished her a little.

He, himself, if he had sincerely confessed his impressions and his reflections, would have been obliged to admit that he was greatly amazed.

But this unfortunate man, who, in days to come, would be compelled to reproach himself bitterly for the excess of his fanaticism, refused to confess this truth even to himself. His life was to be spent in defending prejudices which his own reason condemned.

Forced by Mlle. Blanche's will into the midst of a discussion, he was really disgusted with the ridiculous and intense greediness of M. de Courtornieu's noble guests.

Decorations, fortune, honours, power—they desired everything.

They were satisfied that their pure devotion deserved the most munificent rewards. It was only the most modest who declared that he would be content with the epaulets of a lieutenant-general.

Many were the recriminations, stinging words, and bitter reproaches.

The Marquis de Courtornieu, who acted as president of the council, was nearly exhausted with exclaiming:

"Be calm, gentlemen, be calm! A little moderation, if you please!"

"All these men are mad," thought Martial, with difficulty restraining an intense desire to laugh; "they are insane enough to be placed in a mad-house."

But he was not obliged to render a report of the *séance*. The deliberations were soon fortunately interrupted by a summons to dinner.

Mlle. Blanche, when the young marquis rejoined her, quite forgot to question him about the doings of the council.

In fact, what did the hopes and plans of these people matter to her?

She cared very little about them or about the people themselves, since they were below her father in rank, and most of them were not as rich.

An absorbing thought—a thought of her future, and of her happiness, filled her mind to the exclusion of all other subjects.

The few moments that she had passed alone, after Marie-Anne's departure, she had spent in grave reflection.

Martial's mind and person pleased her. In him were combined all the qualifications which any ambitious woman would desire in a husband—and she decided that he should be *her* husband. Probably she would not have arrived at this conclusion so quickly, had it not been for the feeling of jealousy aroused in her heart. But from the very moment that she could believe or suspect that another woman was likely to dispute the possession of Martial with her, she desired him.

From that moment she was completely controlled by one of those strange passions in which the heart has no part, but which take entire possession of the brain and lead to the worst of follies.

Let the woman whose pulse has never quickened its beating under the influence of this counterfeit of love, cast the first stone.

That she could be vanquished in this struggle for supremacy; that there could be any doubt of the result, were thoughts which never once entered the mind of Mlle. Blanche.

She had been told so often, it had been repeated again and again, that the man whom she would choose must esteem himself fortunate above all others.

She had seen her father besieged by so many suitors for her hand.

"Besides," she thought, smiling proudly, as she surveyed her reflection in the large mirrors; "am I not as pretty as Marie-Anne?"

"Far prettier!" murmured the voice of vanity; "and you possess what your rival does not: birth, wit, the genius of coquetry!"

She did, indeed, possess sufficient cleverness and patience to assume and to sustain the character which seemed most likely to dazzle and to fascinate Martial.

As to maintaining this character *after* marriage, if it did not please her to do so, that was another matter!

The result of all this was that during dinner Mlle. Blanche exercised all her powers of fascination upon the young marquis.

She was so evidently desirous of pleasing him that several of the guests remarked it.

Some were even shocked by such a breach of conventionality. But Blanche de Courtornieu could do as she chose; she was well aware of that. Was she not the richest heiress for miles and miles around? No slander can tarnish the brilliancy of a fortune of more than a million in hard cash.

"Do you know that those two young people will have a joint income of between seven and eight hundred thousand francs!" said one old viscount to his neighbour.

Martial yielded unresistingly to the charm of his position.

How could he suspect unworthy motives in a young girl whose eyes were so pure, whose laugh rang out with the crystalline clearness of childhood!

Involuntarily he compared her with the grave and thoughtful Marie-Anne, and his imagination floated from one to the other, inflamed by the strangeness of the contrast.

He occupied a seat beside Mlle. Blanche at table; and they chatted gaily, amusing themselves at the expense of the other guests who were again conversing upon political matters, and whose enthusiasm waxed warmer and warmer as course succeeded course.

Champagne was served with the dessert; and the company drank to the allies whose victorious bayonets had forced a passage for the King to return to Paris; they drank to the English, to the Prussians, and to the Russians, whose horses were trampling the crops under foot.

The name of d'Escorval heard, above the clink of the glasses, suddenly aroused Martial from his dream of enchantment.

An old gentleman had just risen, and proposed that active measures should be taken to rid the neighbourhood of the Baron d'Escorval.

"The presence of such a man dishonours our country," said he; "he is a frantic Jacobin, and admitted to be dangerous, since Monsieur Fouché has him upon his list of suspected persons; and he is even now under the surveillance of the police."

This discourse could not have failed to arouse intense anxiety in M. d'Escorval's breast had he seen the ferocity expressed on almost every face.

Still no one spoke: hesitation could be read in every eye.

Martial, too, had turned so white that Mlle. Blanche remarked his pallor and thought he was ill.

In fact, a terrible struggle was going on in the soul of the young marquis; a conflict between his honour and passion.

Had he not longed only a few hours before to find some way of driving Maurice from the country?

Ah, well! the opportunity he so ardently desired now presented itself. It was impossible to imagine a better one. If the proposed step was taken the Baron d'Escorval and his family would be forced to leave France forever!

The company hesitated; Martial saw it, and felt that a single word from him, for or against, would decide the matter.

After a few minutes of frightful uncertainty, honour triumphed.

He rose and declared that the proposed measure was bad—impolitic.

"Monsieur d'Escorval," he remarked, "is one of those men who diffuse around them a perfume of honesty and justice. Have the good sense to respect the consideration which is justly his."

As he had foreseen, his words decided the matter. The cold and haughty manner which he knew so well how to assume, his few but incisive words, produced a great effect.

"It would evidently be a great mistake!" was the general cry.

Martial reseated himself; Mlle. Blanche leaned toward him.

"You have done well," she murmured; "you know how to defend your friends."

"Monsieur d'Escorval is not my friend," replied Martial, in a voice which revealed the struggle through which he had passed. "The injustice of the proposed measure incensed me, that is all."

Mlle. de Courtornieu was not to be deceived by an explanation like this. Still she added:

"Then your conduct is all the more grand, Monsieur."

But such was not the opinion of the Duc de Sairmeuse. On returning to the château some hours later he reproached his son for his intervention.

"Why the devil did you meddle with the matter?" inquired the duke. "I would not have liked to take upon myself the odium of the proposition, but since it had been made——"

"I was anxious to prevent such an act of useless folly!"

"Useless folly! Zounds! Marquis, you carry matters with a high hand. Do you think that this d——d baron adores you? What would you say if you heard that he was conspiring against us?"

"I should answer with a shrug of the shoulders."

"You would! Very well; do me the favour to question Chupin."

CHAPTER XV

It was only two weeks since the Duc de Sairmeuse had returned to France; he had not yet had time to shake the dust of exile from his feet, and already his imagination saw enemies on every side.

He had been at Sairmeuse only two days, and yet he unhesitatingly accepted the venomous reports which Chupin poured into his ears.

The suspicions which he was endeavouring to make Martial share were cruelly unjust.

At the moment when the duke accused the baron of conspiring against the house of Sairmeuse, that unfortunate man was weeping at the bedside of his son, who was, he believed, at the point of death.

Maurice was indeed dangerously ill.

His excessively nervous organization had succumbed before the rude assaults of destiny.

When, in obedience to M. Lacheneur's imperative order, he left the grove on the Reche, he lost the power of reflecting calmly and deliberately upon the situation.

Marie-Anne's incomprehensible obstinacy, the insults he had received from the marquis, and Lacheneur's feigned anger were mingled in inextricable confusion, forming one immense, intolerable misfortune, too crushing for his powers of resistance.

The peasants who met him on his homeward way were struck by his singular demeanour, and felt convinced that some great catastrophe had just befallen the house of the Baron d'Escorval.

Some bowed; others spoke to him, but he did not see or hear them.

Force of habit—that physical memory which mounts guard when the mind is far away—brought him back to his home.

His features were so distorted with suffering that Mme. d'Escorval, on seeing him, was seized with a most sinister presentiment, and dared not address him.

He spoke first.

"All is over!" he said, hoarsely, "but do not be worried, mother; I have some courage, as you shall see."

He did, in fact, seat himself at the table with a resolute air. He ate even more than usual; and his father noticed, without alluding to it, that he drank much more wine than usual.

He was very pale, his eyes glittered, his gestures were excited, and his voice was husky. He talked a great deal, and even jested.

"Why will he not weep?" thought Mme. d'Escorval; "then I shall not be so much alarmed, and I could try to comfort him."

This was Maurice's last effort. When dinner was over he went to his room, and when his mother, who had gone again and again to listen at his door, finally decided to enter his chamber, she found him lying upon the bed, muttering incoherently.

She approached him. He did not appear to recognize or even to see her. She spoke to him. He did not seem to hear. His face was scarlet, his lips were parched. She took his hand; it was burning; and still he was shivering, and his teeth were chattering as if with cold.

A mist swam before the eyes of the poor woman; she feared she was about to faint; but, summoning all her strength, she conquered her weakness and, dragging herself to the staircase, she cried:

"Help! help! My son is dying!"

With a bound M. d'Escorval reached his son's chamber, looked at him and dashed out again, summoned a servant, and ordered him to gallop to Montaignac and bring a physician without a moment's delay.

There was, indeed, a doctor at Sairmeuse, but he was the most stupid of men—a former surgeon in the army, who had been dismissed for incompetency. The peasants shunned him as they would the plague; and in case of sickness always sent for the *curé*. M. d'Escorval followed their example, knowing that the physician from Montaignac could not arrive until nearly morning.

Abbé Midon had never frequented the medical schools, but since he had been a priest the poor so often asked advice of him that he applied himself to the study of medicine, and, aided by experience, he had acquired a knowledge of the art which would have won him a diploma from the faculty anywhere.

At whatever hour of the day or night parishioners came to ask his assistance, he was always ready—his only answer: "Let us go at once."

And when the people of the neighbourhood met him on the road with his little box of medicine slung over his shoulder, they took off their hats respectfully and stood aside to let him pass. Those who did not respect the priest honoured the man.

For M. d'Escorval, above all others, Abbé Midon would make haste. The baron was his friend; and a terrible apprehension seized him when he saw Mme. d'Escorval at the gate watching for him. By the way in which she rushed to meet him, he thought she was about to announce some irreparable misfortune. But no—she took his hand, and, without uttering a word, she led him to her son's chamber.

The condition of the poor youth was really very critical; the *abbé* perceived this at a glance, but it was not hopeless.

"We will get him out of this," he said, with a smile that reawakened hope.

And with the coolness of an old practitioner, he bled him freely, and ordered applications of ice to his head.

In a moment all the household were busied in fulfilling the *curé's* orders. He took advantage of the opportunity to draw the baron aside in the embrasure of a window.

"What has happened?" he asked.

"A disappointment in love," M. d'Escorval replied, with a despairing gesture. "Monsieur Lacheneur has refused the hand of his daughter, which I asked in behalf of my son. Maurice was to have seen Marie-Anne to-day. What passed between them I do not know. The result you see."

The baroness re-entered the room, and the two men said no more. A truly funereal silence pervaded the apartment, broken only by the moans of Maurice.

His excitement instead of abating had increased in violence. Delirium peopled his brain with phantoms; and the name of Marie-Anne, Martial de Sairmeuse, and Chanlouineau dropped so incoherently from his lips that it was impossible to read his thoughts.

How long that night seemed to M. d'Escorval and his wife, only those know who have counted each second beside the sick-bed of some loved one.

Certainly their confidence in the companion in their vigil was great; but he was not a regular physician like the other, the one whose coming they awaited.

Just as the light of the morning made the candles turn pale, they heard the furious gallop of a horse, and soon the doctor from Montaignac entered.

He examined Maurice carefully, and, after a short conference with the priest:

"I see no immediate danger," he declared. "All that can be done has been done. The malady must be allowed to take its course. I will return."

He did return the next day and many days after, for it was not until a week had passed that Maurice was declared out of danger.

Then he confided to his father all that had taken place in the grove on the Reche. The slightest detail of the scene had engraved itself indelibly upon his memory. When the recital was ended:

"Are you quite sure," asked his father, "that you correctly understood Marie-Anne's reply? Did she tell you that if her father gave his consent to your marriage she would refuse hers?"

"Those were her very words."

"And still she loves you?"

"I am sure of it."

"You were not mistaken in Monsieur Lacheneur's tone when he said to you: 'Go, you little wretch! do you wish to render all my precautions useless?'"

"No."

M. d'Escorval sat for a moment in silence.

"This passes comprehension," he murmured at last.

And so low that his son could not hear him, he added:

"I will see Lacheneur to-morrow; this mystery must be explained."

CHAPTER XVI

The cottage where M. Lacheneur had taken refuge was situated on a hill overlooking the water.

It was, as he had said, a small and humble dwelling, but it was rather less miserable than the abodes of most of the peasants of the district.

It was only one story high, but it was divided into three rooms, and the roof was covered with thatch.

In front was a tiny garden, in which a few fruit-trees, some withered cabbages, and a vine which covered the cottage to the roof, managed to find subsistence.

This garden was a mere nothing, but even this slight conquest over the sterility of the soil had cost Lacheneur's deceased aunt almost unlimited courage and patience.

For more than twenty years the poor woman had never, for a single day, failed to throw upon her garden three or four basketfuls of richer soil, which she was obliged to bring more than half a league.

It had been more than a year since she died; but the little pathway which her patient feet had worn in the performance of this daily task was still distinctly visible.

This was the path which M. d'Escorval, faithful to his resolution, took the following day, in the hope of wresting from Marie-Anne's father the secret of his inexplicable conduct.

He was so engrossed in his own thoughts that he failed to notice the overpowering heat as he climbed the rough hillside in the full glare of the noonday sun.

When he reached the summit, however, he paused to take breath; and while wiping the perspiration from his brow, he turned to look back on the road which he had traversed.

It was the first time he had visited the spot, and he was surprised at the extent of the landscape which stretched before him.

From this point, which is the most elevated in the surrounding country, one can survey the entire valley of the Oiselle, and discern, in the distance, the redoubtable citadel of Montaignac, built upon an almost inaccessible rock.

This last circumstance, which the baron was afterward doomed to recall in the midst of the most terrible scenes, did not strike him then. Lacheneur's house absorbed all his attention.

His imagination pictured vividly the sufferings of this unfortunate man, who, only two days before, had relinquished the splendours of the Château de Sairmeuse to repair to this wretched abode.

He rapped at the door of the cottage.

"Come in!" said a voice.

The baron lifted the latch and entered.

The room was small, with unwhitewashed walls, but with no other floor than the ground; no ceiling save the thatch that formed the roof.

A bed, a table and two wooden benches constituted the entire furniture.

Seated upon a stool, near the tiny window, sat Marie-Anne, busily at work upon a piece of embroidery.

She had abandoned her former mode of dress, and her costume was that worn by the peasant girls.

When M. d'Escorval entered she rose, and for a moment they remained silently standing, face to face, she apparently calm, he visibly agitated.

He was looking at Marie-Anne; and she seemed to him transfigured. She was much paler and considerably thinner; but her beauty had a strange and touching charm—the sublime radiance of heroic resignation and of duty nobly fulfilled.

Still, remembering his son, he was astonished to see this tranquillity.

"You do not ask me for news of Maurice," he said, reproachfully.

"I had news of him this morning, Monsieur, as I have had every day. I know that he is improving; and that, since day before yesterday, he has been allowed to take a little nourishment."

"You have not forgotten him, then?"

She trembled; a faint blush suffused throat and forehead, but it was in a calm voice that she replied:

"Maurice knows that it would be impossible for me to forget him, even if I wished to do so."

"And yet you have told him that you approve your father's decision!"

"I told him so, Monsieur, and I shall have the courage to repeat it."

"But you have made Maurice wretched, unhappy, child; he has almost died."

She raised her head proudly, sought M. d'Escorval's eyes, and when she had found them:

"Look at me, Monsieur. Do you think that I, too, do not suffer?"

M. d'Escorval was abashed for a moment; but recovering himself, he took Marie-Anne's hand, and pressing it affectionately, he said:

"So Maurice loves you; you love him; you suffer; he has nearly died, and still you reject him!"

"It must be so, Monsieur."

"You say this, my dear child—you say this, and you undoubtedly believe it. But I, who have sought to discover the necessity of this immense sacrifice, have failed to find it. Explain to me, then, why this must be so, Marie-Anne. Who knows but you are frightened by chimeras, which my experience can scatter with a breath? Have you no confidence in me? Am I not an old friend? It may be that your father, in his despair, has adopted extreme resolutions. Speak, let us combat them together. Lacheneur knows how devotedly I am attached to him. I will speak to him; he will listen to me."

"I can tell you nothing, Monsieur."

"What! you are so cruel as to remain inflexible when a father entreats you on his knees—a father who says to you: 'Marie-Anne, you hold in your hands the happiness, the life, the reason of my son——'"

Tears glittered in Marie-Anne's eyes, but she drew away her hand.

"Ah! it is you who are cruel, Monsieur; it is you who are without pity. Do you not see what I suffer, and that it is impossible for me to endure further torture? No, I have nothing to tell you; there is nothing you can say to my father. Why do you seek to impair my courage when I require it all to struggle against my despair? Maurice must forget me; he must never see me again. This is fate; and he must not fight against it. It would be folly. We are parted forever. Beseech Maurice to leave the country, and if he refuses, you, who are his father, must command him to do so. And you, too, Monsieur, in Heaven's name, flee from us. We shall bring misfortune upon you. Never return here; our house is accursed. The fate that overshadows us will ruin you also."

She spoke almost wildly. Her voice was so loud that it penetrated an adjoining room.

The communicating door opened and M. Lacheneur appeared upon the threshold.

At the sight of M. d'Escorval he uttered an oath. But there was more sorrow and anxiety than anger in his manner, as he said:

"You, Monsieur, you here!"

The consternation into which Marie-Anne's words had thrown M. d'Escorval was so intense that it was with great difficulty he stammered out a response.

"You have abandoned us entirely; I was anxious about you. Have you forgotten our old friendship? I come to you——"

The brow of the former master of Sairmeuse remained overcast.

"Why did you not inform me of the honour that the baron had done me, Marie-Anne?" he said sternly.

She tried to speak, but could not; and it was the baron who replied:

"Why, I have but just come, my dear friend."

M. Lacheneur looked suspiciously, first at his daughter, then at the baron.

"What did they say to each other while they were alone?" he was evidently wondering.

But, however great may have been his disquietude, he seemed to master it; and it was with his old-time affability of manner that he invited M. d'Escorval to follow him into the adjoining room.

"It is my reception room and my cabinet combined," he said, smiling.

This room, which was much larger than the first, was as scantily furnished; but it contained several piles of small books and an infinite number of tiny packages.

Two men were engaged in arranging and sorting these articles.

One was Chanlouineau.

M. d'Escorval did not remember that he had ever seen the other, who was a young man.

"This is my son, Jean, Monsieur," said Lacheneur. "He has changed since you last saw him ten years ago."

It was true. It had been, at least, ten years since the baron had seen Lacheneur's son.

How time flies! He had left him a boy; he found him a man.

Jean was just twenty; but his haggard features and his precocious beard made him appear much older.

He was tall and well formed, and his face indicated more than average intelligence.

Still he did not impress one favourably. His restless eyes were always invading yours; and his smile betrayed an unusual degree of shrewdness, amounting almost to cunning.

As his father presented him, he bowed profoundly; but he was very evidently out of temper.

M. Lacheneur resumed:

"Having no longer the means to maintain Jean in Paris, I have made him return. My ruin will, perhaps, be a blessing to him. The air of great cities is not good for the son of a peasant. Fools that we are, we send them there to teach them to rise above their fathers. But they do nothing of the kind. They think only of degrading themselves."

"Father," interrupted the young man; "father, wait, at least, until we are alone!"

"Monsieur d'Escorval is not a stranger."

Chanlouineau evidently sided with the son, since he made repeated signs to M. Lacheneur to be silent.

Either he did not see them, or he pretended not to see them, for he continued:

"I must have wearied you, Monsieur, by telling you again and again: 'I am pleased with my son. He has a commendable ambition; he is working faithfully; he will succeed.' Ah! I was a poor, foolish father! The friend who carried Jean the order to return has enlightened me, to my sorrow. This model young man you see here left the gaming-house only to run to public balls. He was in love with a wretched little ballet-girl in some low theater; and to please this creature, he also went upon the stage, with his face painted red and white."

"To appear upon the stage is not a crime."

"No; but it is a crime to deceive one's father and to affect virtues which one does not possess! Have I ever refused you money? No! Notwithstanding that, you have contracted debts everywhere, and you owe at least twenty thousand francs."

Jean hung his head; he was evidently angry, but he feared his father.

"Twenty thousand francs!" repeated M. Lacheneur. "I had them a fortnight ago; now I have nothing. I can hope to obtain this sum only through the generosity of the Duc de Sairmeuse and his son."

These words from Lacheneur's lips astonished the baron.

Lacheneur perceived it, and it was with every appearance of sincerity and good faith that he resumed:

"Does what I say surprise you? I understand why. My anger at first made me give utterance to all sorts of absurd threats. But I am calm now, and I realize my injustice. What could I expect the duke to do? To make me a present of Sairmeuse? He was a trifle brusque, I confess, but that is his way; at heart he is the best of men."

"Have you seen him again?"

"No; but I have seen his son. I have even been with him to the château to designate the articles which I desire to keep. Oh! he refused me nothing. Everything was placed at my disposal—everything. I selected what I wished—furniture, clothing, linen. It is all to be brought here; and I shall be quite a *grand seigneur*."

"Why not seek another house? This—"

"This pleases me, Monsieur. Its situation suits me perfectly."

In fact, why should not the Sairmeuses have regretted their odious conduct? Was it impossible that Lacheneur, in spite of his indignation, should conclude to accept honourable separation? Such were M. d'Escorval's reflections.

"To say that the marquis has been kind is saying too little," continued Lacheneur. "He has shown us the most delicate attentions. For example, having noticed how much Marie-Anne regrets the loss of her flowers, he has declared that he is going to send her plants to stock our small garden, and that they shall be renewed every month."

Like all passionate men, M. Lacheneur overdid his part. This last remark was too much; it awakened a sinister suspicion in M. d'Escorval's mind.

"Good God!" he thought, "does this wretched man meditate some crime?"

He glanced at Chanlouineau, and his anxiety increased. On hearing the names of the marquis and of Marie-Anne, the robust farmer had turned pale.

"It is decided," said Lacheneur, with an air of the utmost satisfaction, "that they will give me the ten thousand francs bequeathed to me by Mademoiselle Armande. Moreover, I am to fix upon such a sum as I consider a just recompense for my services. And that is not all; they have offered me the position of manager at Sairmeuse; and I was to be allowed to occupy the gamekeeper's cottage, where I lived so long. But on reflection I refused this offer. After having enjoyed for so long a time a fortune which did not belong to me, I am anxious to amass a fortune of my own."

"Would it be indiscreet in me to inquire what you intend to do?"

"Not the least in the world. I am going to turn pedler."

M. d'Escorval could not believe his ears. "Pedler?" he repeated.

"Yes, Monsieur. Look, there is my pack in that corner."

"But this is absurd!" exclaimed M. d'Escorval. "People can scarcely earn their daily bread in this way."

"You are wrong, Monsieur. I have considered the subject carefully; the profits are thirty per cent. And besides, there will be three of us to sell goods, for I shall confide one pack to my son, and another to Chanlouineau."

"What! Chanlouineau?"

"He has become my partner in the enterprise."

"And his farm—who will take care of that?"

"He will employ day labourers."

And then, as if wishing to make M. d'Escorval understand that his visit had lasted quite long enough, Lacheneur began arranging the little packages which were destined to fill the pack of the traveling merchant.

But the baron was not to be gotten rid

of so easily, now that his suspicions had become almost a certainty.

"I must speak with you," he said, brusquely.

M. Lacheneur turned.

"I am very busy," he replied, with a very evident reluctance.

"I ask only five minutes. But if you have not the time to spare to-day, I will return to-morrow—day after to-morrow—and every day until I can see you in private."

Lacheneur saw plainly that it would be impossible to escape this interview, so, with the gesture of a man who resigns himself to a necessity, addressing his son and Chanlouineau, he said:

"Go outside for a few moments."

They obeyed, and as soon as the door had closed behind them, Lacheneur said:

"I know very well, Monsieur, the arguments you intend to advance; and the reason of your coming. You come to ask me again for Marie-Anne. I know that my refusal has nearly killed Maurice. Believe me, I have suffered cruelly at the thought; but my refusal is none the less irrevocable. There is no power in the world capable of changing my resolution. Do not ask my motives; I shall not reveal them; but rest assured that they are sufficient."

"Are we not your friends?"

"You, Monsieur!" exclaimed Lacheneur, in tones of the most lively affection, "you! ah! you know it well! You are the best, the only friends, I have here below. I should be the basest and the most miserable of men if I did not guard the recollection of all your kindnesses until my eyes close in death. Yes, you are my friends; yes, I am devoted to you—and it is for that very reason that I answer: no, no, never!"

There could no longer be any doubt. M. d'Escorval seized Lacheneur's hands, and almost crushing them in his grasp:

"Unfortunate man!" he exclaimed, hoarsely, "what do you intend to do? Of what terrible vengeance are you dreaming?"

"I swear to you——"

"Oh! do not swear. You cannot deceive a man of my age and of my experience. I divine your intentions—you hate the Sairmeuse family more mortally than ever."

"I——"

"Yes, you; and if you pretend to forget it, it is only that they may forget it. These people have offended you too cruelly not to fear you; you understand this, and you are doing all in your power to reassure them. You accept their advances—you kneel before them—why? Because they will be more completely in your power when you have lulled their suspicions to rest, and then you can strike them more surely——"

He paused; the communicating door opened, and Marie-Anne appeared upon the threshold.

"Father," said she, "here is the Marquis de Sairmeuse."

This name, which Marie-Anne uttered in a voice of such perfect composure, in the midst of this excited discussion, possessed such a powerful significance, that M. d'Escorval stood as if petrified.

"He dares to come here!" he thought. "How can it be that he does not fear the walls will fall and crush him?"

M. Lacheneur cast a withering glance at his daughter. He suspected her of a ruse which would force him to reveal his secret. For a second, the most furious passion contracted his features.

But, by a prodigious effort of will, he succeeded in regaining his composure. He sprang to the door, pushed Marie-Anne aside, and leaning out, he said:

"Deign to excuse me, Monsieur, if I take the liberty of asking you to wait a moment; I am just finishing some business, and I will be with you in a moment."

Neither agitation nor anger could be detected in his voice; but, rather, a respectful deference, and a feeling of profound gratitude.

Having said this, he closed the door and turned to M. d'Escorval.

The baron, still standing with folded arms, had witnessed this scene with the air of a man who distrusts the evidence of his own senses; and yet he understood the meaning of it only too well.

"So this young man comes here?" he said to Lacheneur.

"Almost every day—not at this hour, usually, but a trifle later."

"And you receive him? you welcome him?"

"Certainly, Monsieur. How can I be insensible to the honour he confers upon me? Moreover, we have subjects of mutual interest to discuss. We are now occupied in legalizing the restitution of Sairmeuse. I can, also, give him much useful information, and many hints regarding the management of the property."

"And do you expect to make me, your old friend, believe that a man of your superior intelligence is deceived by the excuses the marquis makes for these frequent visits? Look me in the eye, and then tell me, if you dare, that you believe these visits are addressed to you!"

Lacheneur's eye did not waver.

"To whom else could they be addressed?" he inquired.

This obstinate serenity disappointed the baron's expectations. He could not have received a heavier blow.

"Take care, Lacheneur," he said, sternly. "Think of the situation in which you place your daughter, between Chanlouineau, who wishes to make her his wife, and Monsieur de Sairmeuse, who desires to make her——"

"Who desires to make her his mistress—is that what you mean? Oh, say the word. But what does that matter? I am sure of Marie-Anne."

M. d'Escorval shuddered.

"In other words," said he, in bitter indignation, "you make your daughter's honour and reputation your stake in the game you are playing."

This was too much. Lacheneur could restrain his furious passion no longer.

"Well, yes!" he exclaimed, with a frightful oath; "yes, you have spoken the truth. Marie-Anne must be, and will be, the instrument of my plans. A man situated as I am is free from the considerations that restrain other men. Fortune, friends, life, honour—I have been forced to sacrifice all. Perish my daughter's virtue—perish my daughter herself—what do they matter, if I can but succeed?"

He was terrible in his fanaticism; and in his mad excitement he clinched his hands as if he were threatening some invisible enemy; his eyes were wild and bloodshot.

The baron seized him by the coat as if to prevent his escape.

"You admit it, then?" he said. "You wish to revenge yourself on the Sairmeuse family, and you have made Chanlouineau your accomplice?"

But Lacheneur, with a sudden movement. freed himself.

"I admit nothing," he replied. "And yet I wish to reassure you——"

He raised his hand as if to take an oath, and in a solemn voice, he said:

"Before God, who hears my words, by all that I hold sacred in this world, by the memory of my sainted wife who lies beneath the sod, I swear that I am plotting nothing against the Sairmeuse family; that I had no thought of touching a hair of their heads. I use them only because they are absolutely indispensable to me. They will aid me without injuring themselves."

Lacneneur, this time, spoke the truth. His hearer felt it; still he pretended to doubt. He thought by retaining his own self-possession, and exciting the anger of this unfortunate man still more, he might, perhaps, discover his real intentions. So it was with an air of suspicion that he said:

"How can one believe this assurance after the avowal you have just made?"

Lacheneur saw the snare; he regained his self-possession as if by magic.

"So be it, Monsieur, refuse to believe me. But you will wring from me only one more word on this subject. I have said too much already. I know that you are guided solely by friendship for me; my gratitude is great, but I cannot reply to your question. The events of the past few days have dug a deep abyss between you and me. Do not endeavour to pass it. Why should we ever meet again? I must say to you, what I said only yesterday to Abbé Midon. If you are my friend, you will never come here again—never—by night or by day, or under any pretext whatever. Even if they tell you that I am dying, do not come. This house is fatal. And if you meet me, turn away; shun me as you would a pestilence whose touch is deadly!"

The baron was silent. This was in substance what Marie-Anne had said to him, only under another form.

"But there is still a wiser course that you might pursue. Everything here is certain to augment the sorrow and despair which afflicts your son. There is not a path, nor a tree, nor a flower which does not cruelly remind him of his former happiness. Leave this place; take him with you, and go far away."

"Ah! how can I do this? Fouché has virtually imprisoned me here."

"All the more reason why you should listen to my advice. You were a friend of the Emperor, hence you are regarded with suspicion; you are surrounded by spies. Your enemies are watching for an opportunity to ruin you. The slightest pretext would suffice to throw you into prison—a letter, a word, an act capable of being misconstrued. The frontier is not far off; go, and wait in a foreign land for happier times."

"That is something which I will not do," said M. d'Escorval, proudly.

His words and accent showed the folly of further discussion. Lacheneur understood this only too well, and seemed to despair.

"Ah! you are like Abbé Midon," he said,

sadly; "you will not believe. Who knows how much your coming here this morning will cost you? It is said that no one can escape his destiny. But if some day the hand of the executioner is laid upon your shoulder, remember that I warned you, and do not curse me."

He paused, and seeing that even this sinister prophecy produced no impression upon the baron, he pressed his hand as if to bid him an eternal farewell, and opened the door to admit the Marquis de Sairmeuse.

Martial was, perhaps, annoyed at meeting M. d'Escorval; but he nevertheless bowed with studied politeness, and began a lively conversation with M. Lacheneur, telling him that the articles he had selected at the château were on their way.

M. d'Escorval could do no more. To speak with Marie-Anne was impossible: Chanlouineau and Jean would not let her go out of their sight.

He reluctantly departed, and oppressed by cruel forebodings, he descended the hill which he had climbed an hour before so full of hope.

What should he say to Maurice?

He had reached the little grove of pines when a hurried footstep behind him made him turn.

The Marquis de Sairmeuse was following him, and motioned him to stop. The baron paused, greatly surprised; Martial, with that air of ingenuousness which he knew so well how to assume, and in an almost brusque tone, said:

"I hope, Monsieur, that you will excuse me for having followed you, when you hear what I have to say. I am not of your party; I loathe what you adore; but I have none of the passion nor the malice of your enemies. For this reason I tell you that if I were in your place I would take a journey. The frontier is but a few miles away: a good horse, a short gallop, and you have crossed it. A word to the wise is—salvation!"

And without waiting for any response, he turned and retraced his steps.

M. d'Escorval was amazed and confounded.

"One might suppose there was a conspiracy to drive me away!" he murmured. "But I have good reason to distrust the disinterestedness of this young man."

Martial was already far off. Had he been less preoccupied, he would have perceived two figures in the wood. Mlle. Blanche de Courtornieu, followed by the inevitable Aunt Medea, had come to play the spy.

(*To be continued*)

The Meeting

By IBN-EL-FARED (1220 A. D.)

Translated by E. Powys Mathers

A SUMMER'S night I met my love on the path
That leads straight to her dwelling and straight to my tent.

We were alone, we two, without watchers or informers,
Far from the tribe, far from jealous eyes and spying ears and harming tongues.
I laid my face on the ground, my brow a footstool for my love.
She said: "Open your heart with joy, we are without watchers;
Come, press your lips to my veil."

But my lips would not consent to it.
I felt that I had two honours to guard,
My love's and mine.

And, as was my desire, we were all night together,
Near to each other, far from the tribe and spying eyes.

And it seemed that I was master
Of all the kingdoms of the world, and that the elements
Obeyed me as slaves.

The Apache Trail In Sunshine Land

By GEORGE LAMBERT LITTLE

LAST Fall on the Sunset Limited from New Orleans to Los Angeles I met the man who introduced me to the Apache Trail trip of Arizona. And I have never ceased to thank him for his kindness.

Stephen Weston knew the land he loved. To him the awesome peaks, deep-cut canyons, strange cactus growths and ancient cliff-dwellings between Globe and Phœnix were old-time friends. Cowboy—prospector—mining engineer—adventurer—he had covered every inch of this sparkling bit of the golden Southwest many times. "Each time," he said, "I find new beauty on the sunshine stretches of the Apache Trail. A man is blind to romance who fails to take this trip on his way to Los Angeles." To both of which sentiments I now heartily subscribe.

It was a day of sapphire skies and golden sunshine when we arrived at Globe. With the rush of crisp, clear desert air in our faces we were whirled away in our comfortable 12-passenger motor car. Over Cemetery Hill and into Apache Land we sped through snake-like canyon walls that shimmered in liquid light with every changing color of the rainbow

Eyes began to sparkle—blood to tingle. Life was a glorious fact as we soared up, up on wings to the summit, nearly four thousand feet above the sea. There a wonder land lay spread before us. To one side was the Gila Valley, on the other that of the Salt River. From their depths rose needle-like spires that seemed to tremble in the swimming sunshine. Down further the jagged rocks quivered, now amethyst, now indigo, now emerald green, to blend gradually with the blue-black shadows at their base. "Like a giant goblet filled with shaking lights," said Weston as we gazed and gazed. And then he pointed out Roosevelt Lake in the distance—a little piece of blue sky that had fluttered to earth.

Next we were whisked away to Apache Lodge at Roosevelt Dam, making a rapid but comfortable descent of 2,000 feet in six miles through a succession of whirling rushes down the smooth road. Just before the dam was reached we caught a glimpse of the ancient cliff-dwellings high on the rocky buttress above the Trail.

At Apache Lodge we enjoyed a fine luncheon and strolled around the huge Roosevelt Dam. It can furnish the power plant it operates with 9,380 horse-power and has created an irrigable area of over 230,000 acres below the Salt River.

If the first part of the trip was thrilling, that after we left Apache Lodge was even more so. Down into the wild gorge of Fish Creek Canyon we glided. The "Walls of Bronze" rising 2,000 feet above the rushing stream all but hemmed us in from the sky. Then our car climbed gently up the steep ascent of Fish Creek Hill to the heights that crown the canyon.

Weaving colorful baskets as only an Indian can

Soon we were gazing awe-struck into the dizzy depths of Hell's Canyon. "Bad place for a fellow to fall in," chuckled Weston at my elbow. "Expect he'd have a hard time finding his way out." Then Canyon Diablo, Niggerhead Mountain, Tortilla Rock, Whirlpool Rock and the Little Alps fled by in beautiful, rapid review.

Day was dying gloriously as we emerged from the foothills and swept past weird Superstition Mountain—the last outpost of the range. Like a golden pomegranate the sun slid silently beneath the blue of the enfolding hills. All about us was a smiling land of fertile fields and glowing gardens. Never could there be a better example of the creative impulse of the irrigation from Roosevelt Dam than the green growing plants of Salt River Valley.

The bronzed farmers of the beautiful little towns of Mesa and Tempe were a happy, healthy lot who shouted hearty greetings to us. Then, too, they were gone, and we were slipping through the park-like streets of Phœnix, where we boarded a comfortable Pullman for Los Angeles.

So our happy trip over the Apache Trail ended. The next day Weston and I parted in Los Angeles. But the trip has lived on pleasantly in my mind and a letter just received from Weston has made me determine to put off my desire no longer. I am joining him at New Orleans next month. This time you can be certain that I'm going to take the detour to the cave-dwellings.

So certain am I that you will enjoy this trip that I am giving you all the information at my disposal. And I might add that if you are contemplating a trip to the Southwest or to the Coast this Winter, by all means take in the Apache Trail. It is easily and comfortably reached by the Sunset Limited of the Southern Pacific on its "Sunshine all the Way" route to California. Commencing November 2, through Pullman cars are operated between New Orleans and Globe on the east and between Los Angeles and Phœnix on the west. Your through ticket in either direction is honored for the side trip with an additional payment of only $10.00. The Sunset Limited carries a club car with barber shop, shower bath and valet service; an observation car with ladies' lounge, shower bath, maid, manicure and hair-dressing service; and there are sleeping cars of the latest type, and excellent diners.

Should you wish further information, you can obtain a very attractive booklet on the Apache Trail and all the facts pertaining to transportation facilities and schedules upon application to the Southern Pacific Lines, 165 Broadway, New York; 35 West Jackson Boulevard, Chicago; Pan-American Bank Building, New Orleans; Southern Pacific Building, Houston; Score Building, Tucson; Pacific Electric Building, Los Angeles; or Southern Pacific Building, San Francisco.

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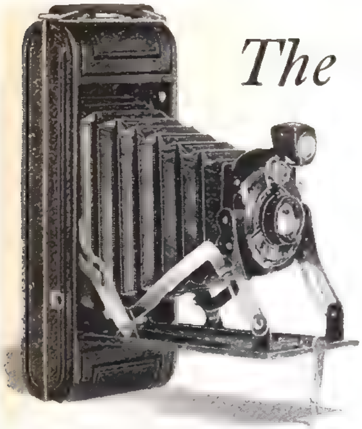

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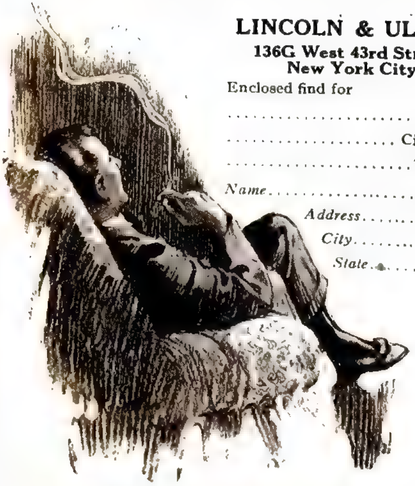

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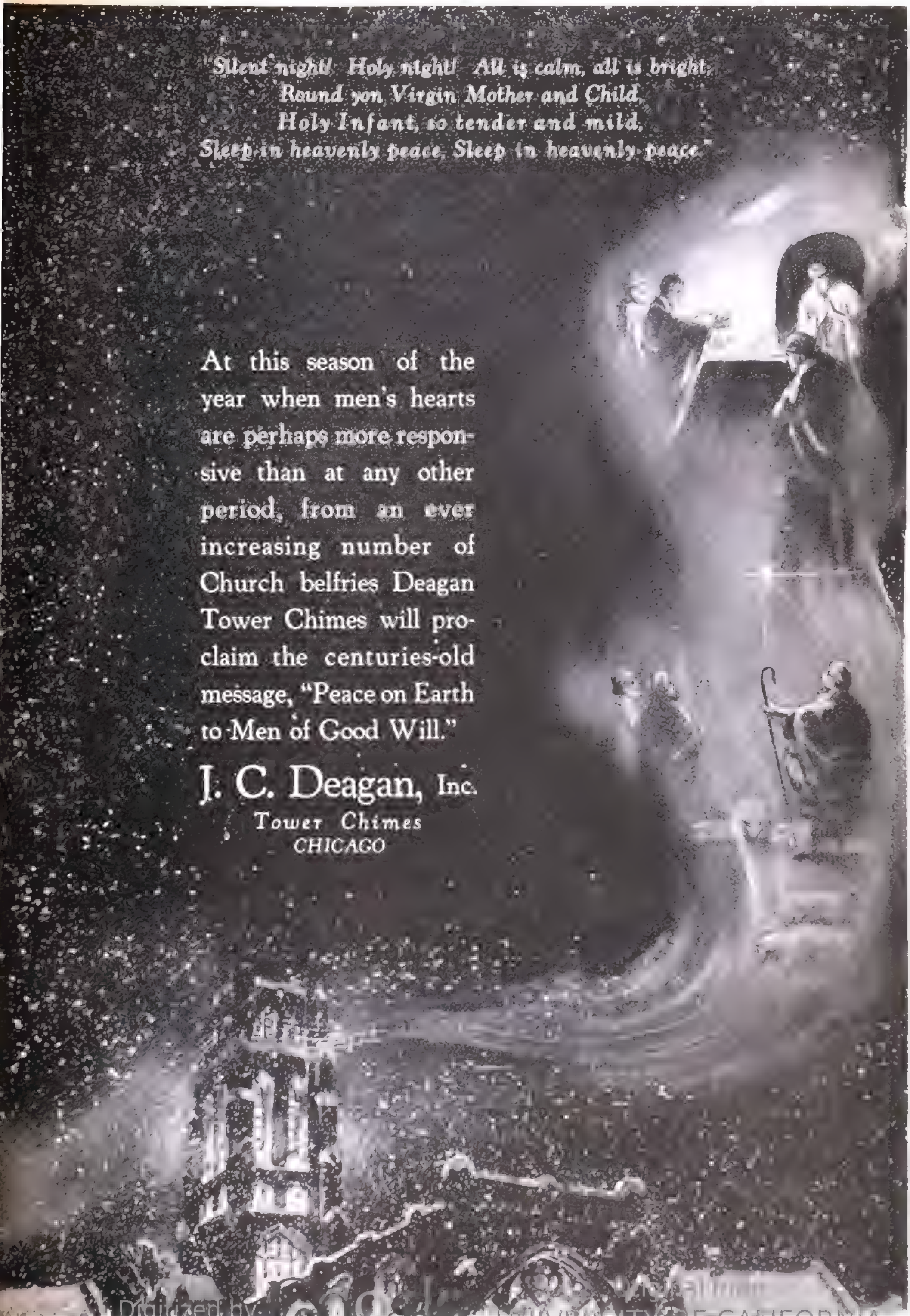

"Silent night! Holy night! All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child,
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace."

At this season of the year when men's hearts are perhaps more responsive than at any other period, from an ever increasing number of Church belfries Deagan Tower Chimes will proclaim the centuries-old message, "Peace on Earth to Men of Good Will."

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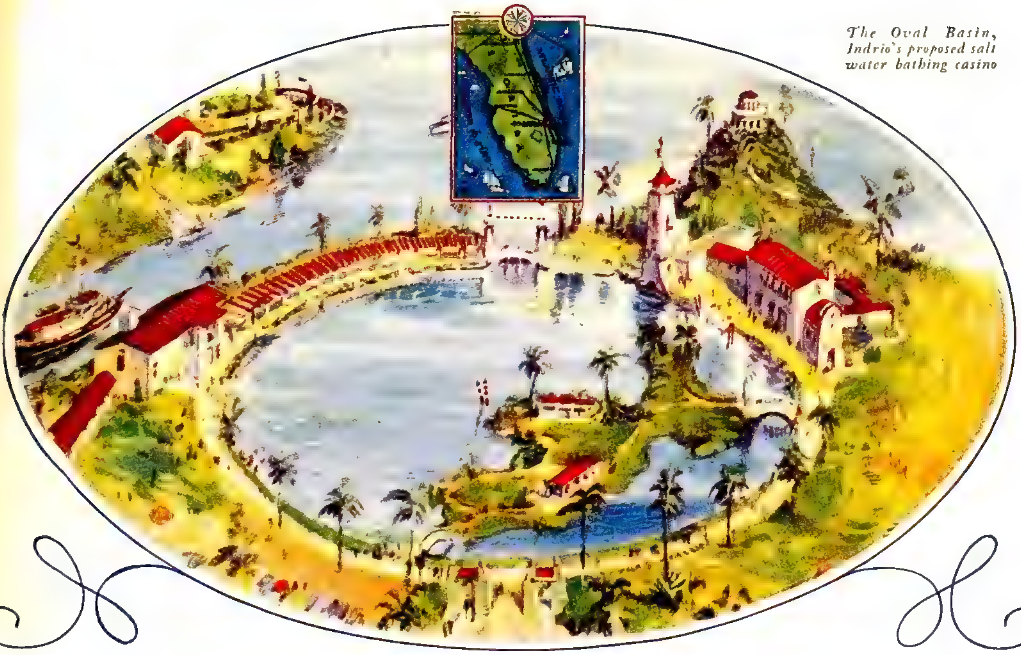

The Oval Basin, Indrio's proposed salt water bathing casino

INDRIO, *Florida*

Just 60 miles north of Palm Beach, on the Dixie Highway and Florida East Coast Railway, is Indrio—destined to become America's most beautiful home town. Already parks, plazas and boulevards are being laid out, while projected improvements include a million-dollar hotel, bathing casino, tennis and roque courts, bridle paths and an 18-hole golf course. Only Mediterranean architecture will be permitted, assuring architectural harmony.

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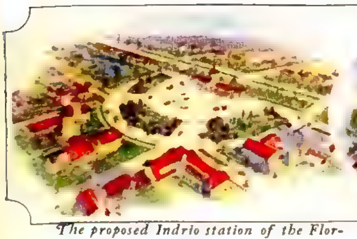
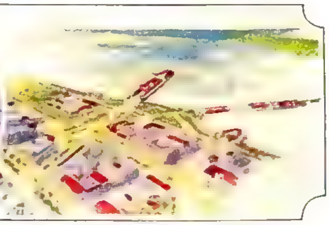


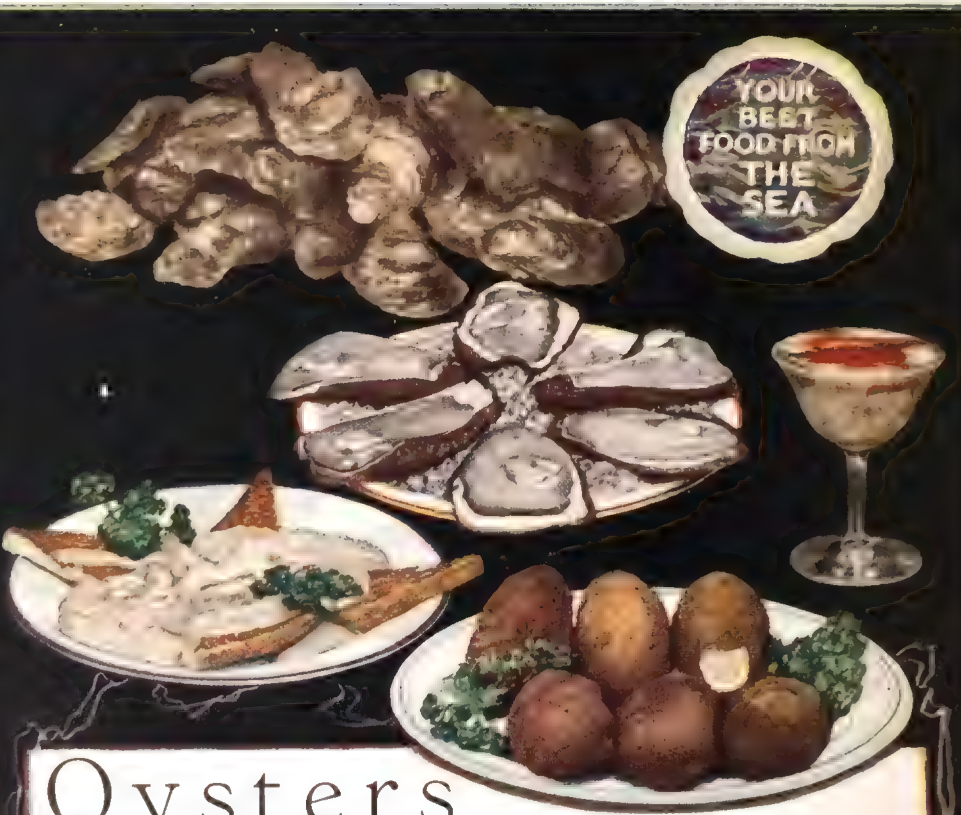
The proposed Indrio station of the Florida East Coast Railway, whose main line affords frequent service north and south



Indrio's waterfront as it will appear when completed, showing the Indian River and beyond it the Atlantic Ocean

INDRIO — *America's Most Beautiful Home Town*

FLORIDA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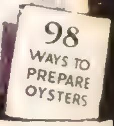

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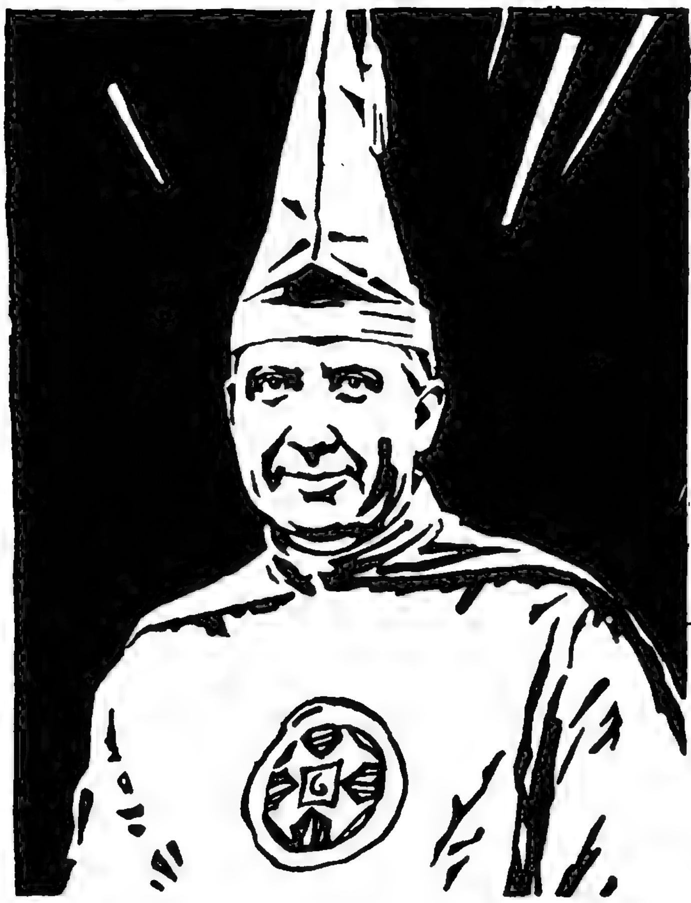

Is the Ku Klux Klan Un-American?

"No!" says Hiram Wesley Evans, Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. And in an authorized interview with Stanley Frost in the December FORUM, Dr. Evans, former Texas dentist, ably defends the mysterious, hooded order of which he is leader.

"Within a few years," says Dr. Evans, "the America of our fathers will be saved or lost. And unless some other way is found, all who wish to see it saved must work with us. We hold firmly that America . . . must be kept American . . . this is our intolerance: we will not endure attempts to tear down the fundamentals on which the whole structure of our nation and our civilization is based."

This article, which is probably the first "official" Klan pronunciamento to receive general circulation, is by way of answer to the attack on the Klan made by Governor Pattangall of Maine in a recent issue of the FORUM.

The FORUM is a non-partisan magazine of free discussion. It gives both sides. FORUM discussions are frankly outspoken and, above all, fair. The FORUM aims to interpret the new America that is gaining consciousness in this decade.

A dozen other features, including a paper by Havelock Ellis and a fantasy by H. G. Wells.

⁂

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DECEMBER

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To
Golden Places

The Travel Point of View

WHY is it that great numbers of men and women travel widely and nevertheless come back, with little added to their outlook on life, and even sometimes in an irritable or deprecating mood? Why is it that others enrich and develop themselves vastly with every trip they make?

The answer lies in *the travel point of view.*

Experienced, mellow travellers of wisdom and insight have always observed this—and none so astutely as that great cosmopolitan, The Hon. James Bryce, former English ambassador to America. Bryce was one of the world's greatest travellers, and certainly one of the world's most sympathetic travellers. He knew how to travel and how to make travel yield many dividends. His books on other countries are accepted as classics in those countries.

Speaking some years before his death before the London Geographical Society, Bryce chose as his topic "The Mental Attitude of the Traveller"—and proceeded to give his hearers a liberal education in the art of travel. Said he:

"Travel is very much like going into a picture gallery. If a man enters the finest gallery in Europe without any previous knowledge of the painters, the schools they belonged to, their dates, etc., he will derive very little benefit and carry away a most confused impression. A little preliminary study will enable him to enjoy the pictures in a way that will be profitable all the rest of his life.

"So it is when we enter the vast gallery of Nature. If we start to travel with a certain amount of preliminary knowledge, our travel repays us more at every step.

"The three things we ought to carry with us in order to learn and to profit are these:

1. We ought to know what to look for.
2. We ought to know how to observe.
3. We ought to reflect on the things we observe.

"Thus also the *pleasures* of travel are three:

1. The pleasure of observation.
2. The pleasure of reflecting upon and generalizing on what we have seen.
3. The pleasure of memory (for it often happens that recollection is the better part of travel).

"The observing faculty which one exerts in travel applies itself to two things: nature and man (or the works of man). Some neglect the one, some neglect the other; but both are necessary to a balanced, full result of travel.

"In the next generation the world will come to seem very small. We will all have travelled, and our capacity for enjoying it doubtless will never die; certainly not if we attain the right mental attitude to travel.

"The love of beauty and knowledge will always remain a source of delight to mankind; and for these things one must travel, to attain ripeness and sufficient angles of comparison."

What an equipment Bryce had for travel, with his eagerness to study the many experiments in government throughout the world, with his knowledge of the histories of people's notions, resources, geography, economics and social psychology!

Yet every traveller nowadays has available the distilled wisdom of travel, the condensed knowledge of peoples and histories, the experienced details of itinerary, and beyond that conveniences and facilities which Bryce and other earlier travellers never enjoyed. The right mental attitude toward travel is something the traveller must himself supply, before he starts, and it is by all odds the most important ingredient in the making of a successful journey, even if only to one of our American National Parks for a week or two. To make a trip around the world without attaining a sound travel point of view is a sad waste, a lost opportunity. We Americans—noted for many years as lacking in the right travel point of view—are now attaining it, and therefore we are coming back from our journeys with far more return for our expenditure, and far more savor from our journeys.

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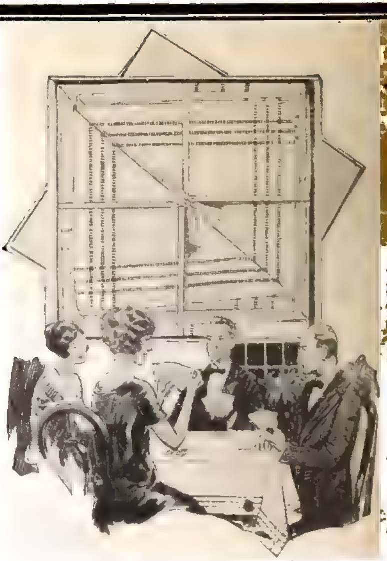

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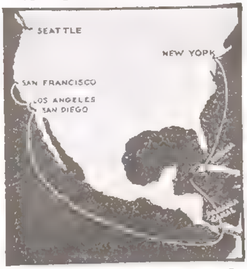

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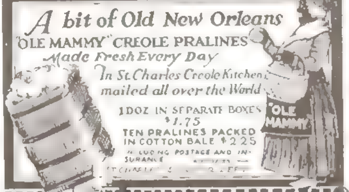

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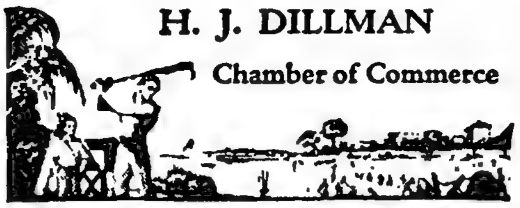

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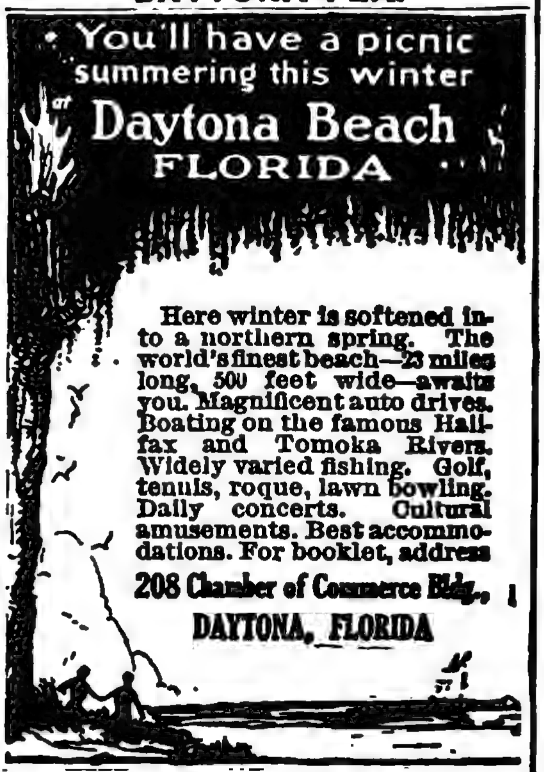

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Phoenix
ARIZONA

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and the song of birds
NOW

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At Christmas our temperature will be around 65 deg. We shall be picking big, juicy Arizona grapefruit and our ranches will be giving us luscious fruit of all kinds, and vegetables. Some days we shall go off into the mountains and bag duck, quail, and other game—or we shall picnic in the open air—or play golf, or tennis. "Winter" here brings a succession of open-air attractions.

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Phoenix
ARIZONA

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Hawaii

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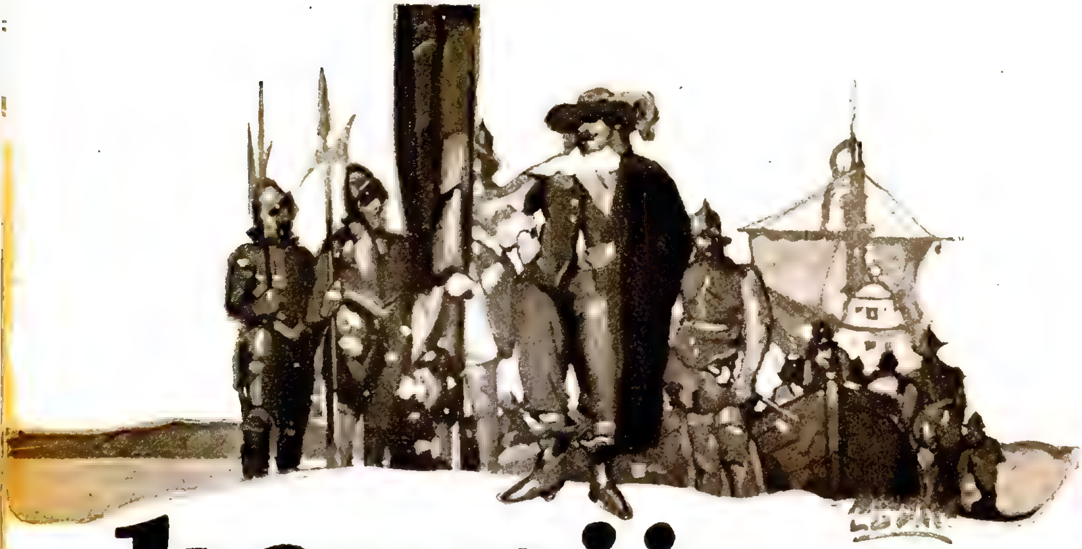

hawaii

Where Don Juan Gaetano planted the Standard of Spain

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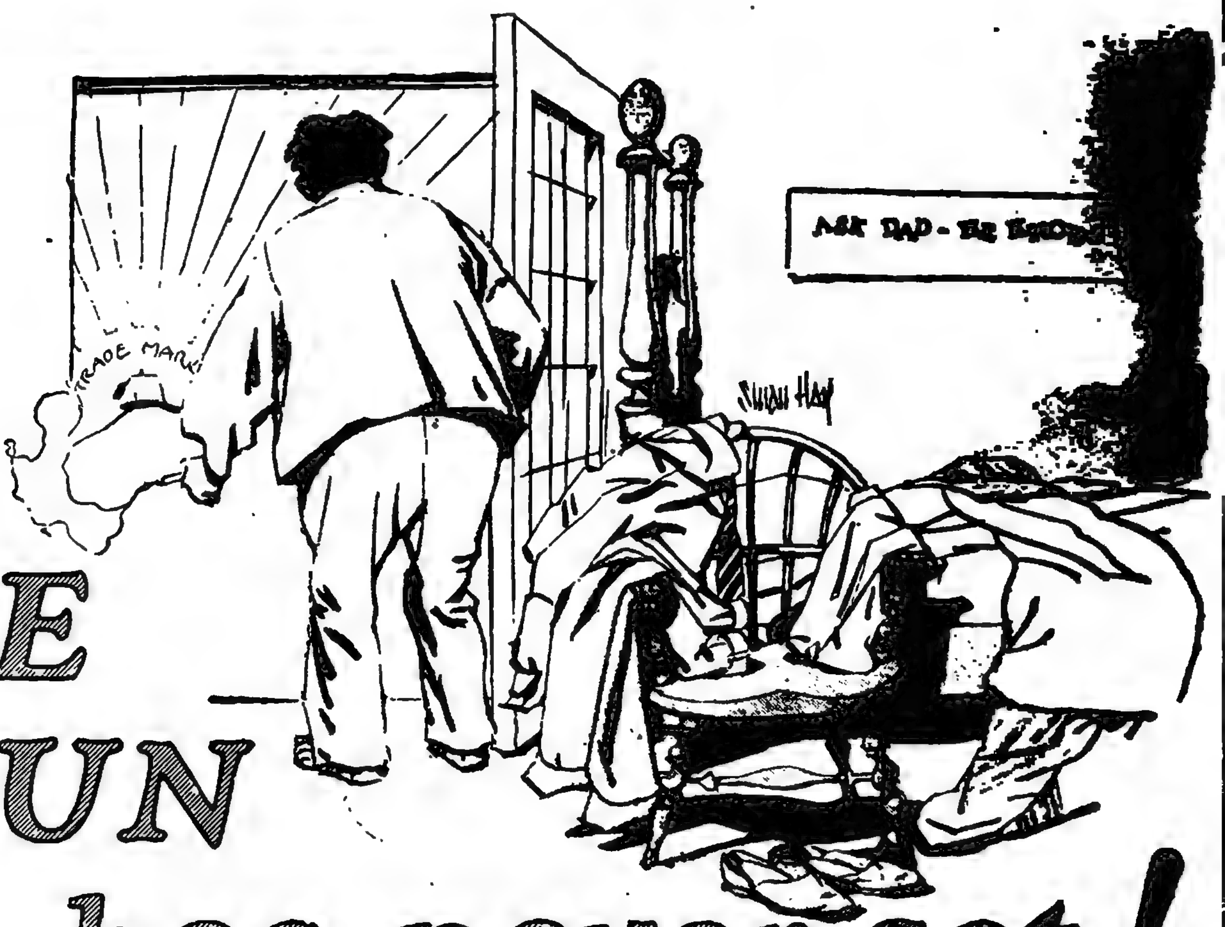


ONE SUN that has never set!

By Irvin S. Cobb

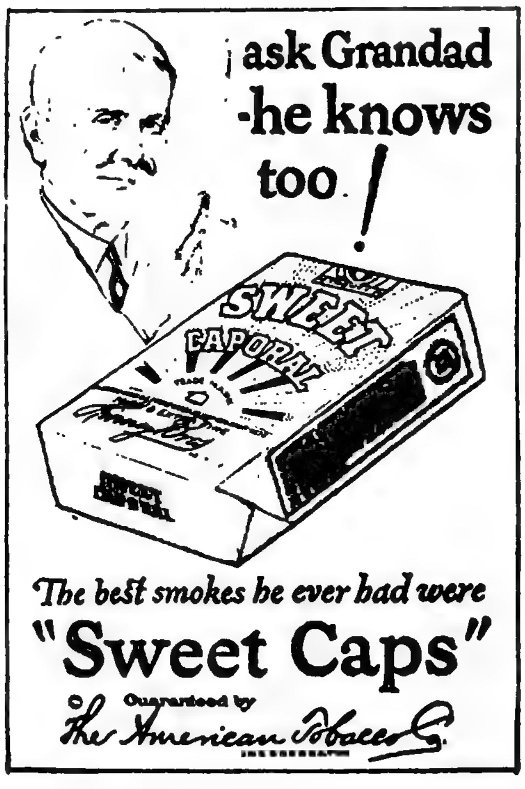
OVER at the factory they told me that the sales of Sweet Caporal Cigarettes had been mounting up steadily here of late. There was no unusual stimulation in the way of a special advertising campaign. But sales had grown larger and still larger. They are growing while you are reading this. More Sweet Caporals are being sold today than were sold yesterday, more will be sold tomorrow than were sold today.

This condition applies to the retailers all over the United States. According to expert opinion there can be but one explanation to account for so spontaneous and unforced a groundswell in the demand for a brand which has been a standard and a staple for forty-seven years.

ASK DAD HE KNOWS

The answer is that an increasing number of cigarette smokers in America are turning to the crusty natural blend that suited their fathers and their grandfathers who bought Sweet Caporal Cigarettes before them, a blend of selected Virginia tobacco, made into cigarettes by a process which has never been changed, with the purest of Vermont maple sugar for its savoring, and positively nothing else.

Perhaps you have noticed that part of the trademark of Sweet Caporals is a blazing sun. That trademark is historic. It appeared on the first package of Sweet Caporals that was manufactured back in 1878. No matter whether you buy the package of 12 Sweet Caporals for ten cents, or the package of 20 Sweet Caporals for fifteen cents, you'll find that same ancient and honorable device upon it. Here is one sun that has never set or sunk in forty-seven years and is rising higher now than it ever rose before. You can't get away from an argument that speaks for itself.



The best smokes he ever had were "Sweet Caps"

Guaranteed by The American Tobacco Co.

Sweet Caporal, to my way of thinking, is that kind of cigarette. It speaks for itself. And it's speaking louder all the time.

Thank you. Irvin S. Cobb

P. S. — *I write an article like this every once in a while. Watch for the next. I have declined propositions to turn out advertisements for various manufactured articles because I feel I merely would be a hired hand, exploiting this, that or the other thing for so much a word. But I reached for this opportunity. I knew I could put my heart in it—could with sincerity endorse the article I was praising.*

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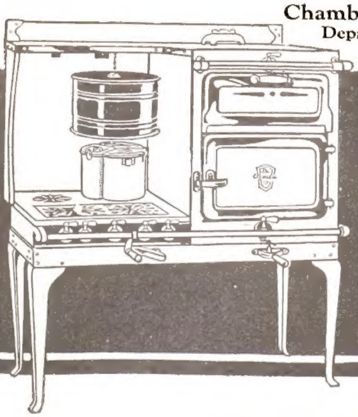

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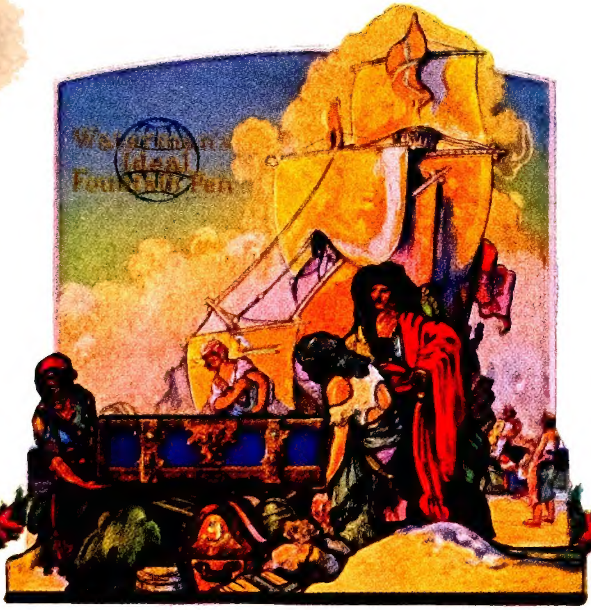

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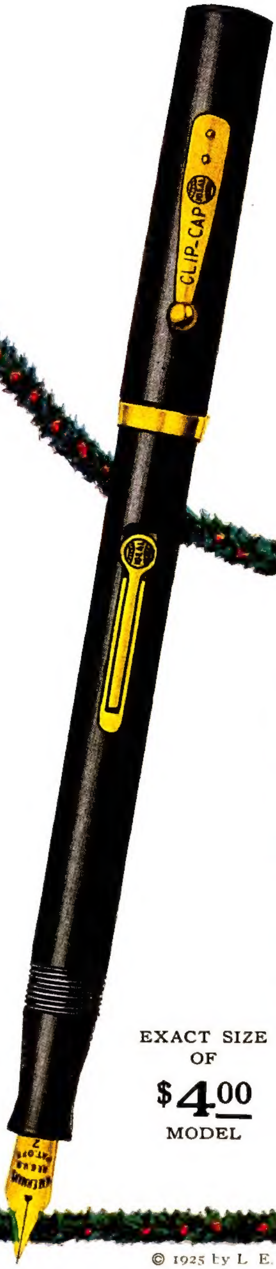

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